



Speech by

**JOHN MICKEL**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Hansard 16 September 1998

**CENSURE OF MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

**Mr MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (6.49 p.m.): The one difference between the electorate of Burnett and the electorate of Bundaberg is that Bundaberg has an outstanding member. I turn now to the real issue tonight. Similar to a dentist having to go over someone else's bad work, we have had to go over the bad work left to us by the member for Toowoomba South. We have had to clean up the mess he left us.

We have had to clean up a situation whereby the Health Department, the bureaucrats as he called them, were advising him that they needed \$6m extra to run the Maryborough and Hervey Bay Hospitals. And, of course, he said, "We should ignore the bureaucrats' advice." He did; he gave them only half the money they needed. They received only \$3m extra when they needed \$6m. He ignored the advice. No wonder they could not run the hospital. No wonder they call him "Half Price Mike". Rather than blaming the Minister, we now see that the person committed to ripping the heart out of the Maryborough and Hervey Bay Hospitals is the member for Toowoomba South. Time and again the member for Toowoomba South assured people in Maryborough that all of the services would remain. How could they remain when they were getting half the amount of money they needed?

To have moved this motion, the Opposition must have more front than the Myer Centre. The member for Maroochydore has been given a hospital pass. Has she not noticed how happy the member for Toowoomba South has been lately? When I saw him wandering around the place smiling at everybody I thought, "Why is this guy so happy? He used to be a Minister. Why is he so happy?" Then I worked it out: he realises what he has done. He is aware of the mess that he left for us to clean up. That is why he is happy. He knows that the Labor Party has to come in here again and clean up the mess he left us. And what a mess it is! He has left us over \$58m in unfunded commitments.

I will give members an example that is close to my electorate. Do members remember the proposed community health centre for Jimboomba? There is not even a plan for it, let alone a dollar for it! We saw exactly the same routine in Maryborough. He did not give them any money. We know all about him. I have crawled over every document. The unfunded commitments amount to \$58m. He is so happy because he has been relieved totally of the responsibility.

Then, of course, there is the health capital works tax—the Horan hospital tax—that he was going to impose. As every capital works project was progressing, the former Minister for Health, the member for Toowoomba South, was ripping money out of recurrent funding—\$100m in two years. Last year we asked a question about this matter and we were told that over the next three years he was going to tear \$144m in recurrent funding out of the hospital system. Did he tell them that? What sort of hospital system could he run with that?

**Mr Dalgleish** interjected.

**Mr MICKEL:** The member was born stupid and he has been going backwards ever since. Then, of course, we saw One Nation crying a few crocodile tears about the hospital. What is its revenue answer for the hospitals? A 2% flat tax, which would put up the cost of medicine and hospital equipment! The only party not offering a GST in the coming election is the Labor Party. A flat tax would tear \$50m out of Government revenue. Let us not talk about hospitals.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr MICKEL:** Listen, digger, the only hospital waiting list you are on is the one for the front bench. You will not have to wait too long for that, either; there is no talent to beat. You would not have public hospitals under your system.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Logan will address the member by his correct title.

**Mr MICKEL:** Sorry, Mr Speaker. The House should support the amendment and ignore this attempt by the Opposition to escape the full blame for its culpability in Maryborough.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr MICKEL:** I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his interjection. He has been the only Premier this century to lose Government after one term, and he did it in two and a half years.

Time expired.

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