



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 12 November 1998

MONTROSE; MR T. DICKSON

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.23 a.m.): On 5 November I attended the annual general meeting of the Queensland Society for Crippled Children at Montrose in Corinda. This society was formed in 1932 as a direct result of the devastating effect of the worldwide epidemic of poliomyelitis on children and their families in Queensland. Since then, the aim of the society has changed to provide support services to children with physical disabilities and their families, and to assist those children to achieve their maximum individual potential for participation in the community.

Mr Tom Dickson, a former recipient of the kind of support provided by Montrose, was guest speaker at the meeting. He told of the illness that confined him to a wheelchair from a very early age. As a child, Tom studied at Montrose and he went on to become a student at the Corinda State High School. He was treated no differently from other students and was included in all of their activities. His disability did not prevent him from joining in sporting activities on the oval. After becoming a trainee in the State Public Service, Mr Dickson was able to achieve a permanent position in the area in which he was trained.

What struck me about Tom was his optimism, his great enjoyment of life and his sense of peace. If someone asked him to go waterskiing, he would not look at them and say, "Can't you see I have a disability?" Rather, his retort would be, "When's it all happening?"

Montrose, the special school property at Corinda, has been leased by the Education Department for many years. When I heard that the school was about to close, I contacted the Minister for Education, the Honourable Dean Wells. He assured me that arrangements would be made to place the affected children into suitable educational facilities. The students have to be moved by the end of 1998 to enable Montrose management to utilise the school facilities to service day clients visiting the site and to house their staff. Dormitories were dilapidated and were becoming too expensive to maintain. The Education Department has negotiated with Montrose to refurbish the dormitory buildings to house students in the school for the 1999 school year as an interim measure.

Time expired.
