



Speech by

**Mr M. HORAN**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

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Hansard 15 September 1998

### **MARYBOROUGH BASE HOSPITAL**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.19 a.m.): The Beattie Labor Government's decision to downgrade Maryborough Base Hospital is the greatest form of political treachery ever witnessed in Queensland politics. The Labor Party went to the recent State election proclaiming a policy of maintaining Maryborough Base Hospital as a major regional hospital in an endeavour to try to match the policy of the coalition. In July 1996, the Fraser Coast Chronicle even quoted the Deputy Premier, Mr Elder. It stated that he had warned the district health council chairman in Maryborough not to move one piece of equipment, transfer one staff member, downgrade one service or remove any resource from the hospital. Clearly, Mr Elder did not give that instruction to the Health Minister, Mrs Edmond, because last week she was busy having beds and equipment removed from the intensive care unit. In July 1997, Mr Elder also told the people of Maryborough that they would have to fight tooth and nail to keep their hospital at its present level. That is just what the people of Maryborough had to do.

The Labor Party's gross political treachery in Maryborough prompted the local branch of the Labor Party to call for an urgent meeting with the Premier. Their local branch president said that branch members were dismayed and disappointed over the loss of the intensive care unit and high-risk birthing facilities. The local branch of the Labor Party believes that local and State bureaucrats are running the health agenda in their area because we have a dud Health Minister.

What a startling admission from the Labor Party. Even the Maryborough branch of the Labor Party knows that Mrs Edmond is not running the show. Where were Mr Beattie and Mr Elder? They were nowhere to be seen.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This morning I made a ruling that members will be addressed by their correct titles.

**Mr HORAN:** At the first sign of trouble, the Premier's open and accessible Government went ducking for cover. The Health Minister was forced to attend a public meeting and all she did was offend the 1,500 people who attended. In an unprecedented move, the four local Lions clubs wrote to the Premier, saying—

"This meeting turned out to be an insult to the people of this region. The questions that were asked of your Minister were mainly answered by a public servant and the general consensus of opinion was that the Minister was quite ill-informed of the importance that this hospital renders to our community."

Quite clearly, Queensland now has a weak and incompetent Labor Health Minister who is not up to the job.

Time expired.

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