



Speech by

**Mr M. HORAN**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

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Hansard 18 November 1998

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.33 p.m.): I join in the debate on the growing concern about the way that the Education Minister is handling his portfolio. If anyone in this House has been able to trip over landmines, it has been the Education Minister. He was the first Minister in the Goss Government to be referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and he was the first Minister to have to apologise to the Parliament. He has made one mistake after another. His biggest mistake and worst blunder was ripping the heart and soul out of the Leading Schools program.

Leading Schools was a great program and the schools in my area certainly liked it. It gave the community an incentive to get behind local schools and become a part of them. It enabled the schools to use the intelligence, the ability and the talents of people from the local communities, who could become involved in the schools and see them rise to greatness. That program was a great innovation in education, but one of the first acts of vandalism of this Minister was to rip out the heart and soul of that program.

This week in the Parliament we have heard about Kimberley College and a move away from due diligence and proper process. Previously the process allowed applications, reviews and independent committee decisions to be made in the proper way. Suddenly, some seven or eight months later, the whole thing has been opened up again for special attention. Why? Before the election, the member for Cook, who was the Opposition Education spokesperson at the time, and the member for Capalaba held a little meeting with the principal designate for Kimberley College, who eventually became the Democrat candidate in the election. What did we see? Previously the Democrats had a split card but, lo and behold, in the seat of Springwood they had a single card. At the previous election the Democrat preferences had predominantly gone to the Liberal Party candidate, but at the last election they suddenly swung the other way. There is certainly something very fishy and smelly about the Kimberley College deal. Once again the poor Education Minister was the messenger for the Labor Party, and he was sent to stitch up the deal.

Nobody could demonstrate better what is happening under Labor in Education than the previous speaker, who spoke about far-north Queensland. Let us look at far-north Queensland. In two and a quarter years the coalition Government poured some \$18m into the seat of Mulgrave with the aid of Naomi Wilson and the Education Minister at the time. The previous three Labor Budgets provided only \$6m. The coalition Government provided three times that amount of money, and we provided it in a far shorter space of time. Naomi Wilson fast-tracked the two-unit preschool at Bentley Park. She made it happen. Naomi Wilson acquired the money for construction.

The member for Barron River can talk about planning and the things that happened under Labor, but Naomi Wilson, the politician, got the money for Mulgrave. She got the money for the first-class, airconditioned primary school at Bentley Park—a school that benefits from the latest technology. The parents then felt that it would be important for their children to follow on to preschool, primary school and secondary school and, again, Naomi Wilson will deliver that. The message for the people of Mulgrave is that if they want decent education facilities, they can rely on Naomi Wilson. The people of Mulgrave have always trusted her. She has a great reputation. She is a real doer and a real achiever.

Let us look at some of the other things that Naomi Wilson has achieved for education: a music block and multipurpose covered area and amenities block at Hambleton State School, an

airconditioned modular building and administration space at the Miriwinni State School, an amenities block and oval upgrade at White Rock State School, two modular buildings in a two-storey general learning block with special education facilities at Yarrabah State School and Building Better Schools initiatives that provided about \$1.2m worth of improvements. Naomi Wilson is a fighter. She got the money for those projects. If one wants someone to rely on in the trenches, one can choose no better than Naomi Wilson.

So far in this election campaign, we have seen flyers for the Labor Party that claim all sorts of initiatives that exist solely because of Naomi Wilson and the coalition Government. A good example is the Bentley Park State School, which was apparently opened a week ago. The kids started school there in January this year, so it has been open for a long time. That school was built because of the coalition Government and, again, Naomi Wilson. So far we have seen nothing but a bumbling and stumbling effort——

Time expired.

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