



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Hansard 22 October 1998

FLINDERS HIGHWAY

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (7.17 p.m.): I rise to point out to the House the state of play in relation to Type 2 road trains traversing the Flinders Highway in north Queensland. The piece of highway in question is that which is located between Cloncurry and Hughenden. The situation is that, with the curfew over that 259 kilometre section of road, these road trains had to have an escort vehicle. That is another impost not only on the industry but also on the transport operator.

I say to the Transport Minister that this is a very ridiculous set of circumstances. Talk about road safety! These are some of the most road safety conscious people in the country today. The road transport industry is already on its knees. This impost is certainly going to further cripple the industry in north Queensland. It will also affect the mining industry, the road freight industry and the livestock industry.

I say to the Minister for Transport: lift this curfew before everybody in north Queensland goes broke. At a meeting that he will attend in Mount Isa on 26 October, I plead with him to show commonsense and to listen to what these people are saying. Some of these road trains can sit up to 12 hours or 14 hours waiting for an escort vehicle. At the same time we have cattle standing on road trains. These cattle are destined for the meatworks. So that delay is a cost to the producer, a cost to the meatworks and a cost to the transport industry.

We have to keep the industry viable in trying economic times. We all know that the road has been carrying Type 2 road trains for a long period. If the Minister wants to play politics with industry—the mining industry, the freight industry and the livestock industry—he is not being fair dinkum about creating jobs in Queensland, especially north Queensland. The mining industry is on its knees as a result of some of these ridiculous decisions.

Time expired.
