



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Hansard 12 November 1998

QUEENSLAND HEALTH

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (6.10 p.m.): It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise to second the motion of the honourable member for Maroochydore. She has highlighted a list of issues that concern not only Queensland Health but also the people of Queensland, for whom we are supposed to be providing health services. I will highlight a few of the contentious issues of concern to the general public of Queensland.

I refer to the Townsville Hospital power crisis. Only a couple of weeks ago the Minister for Mines and Energy apologised to the people of Queensland about the power crisis in this State. As the honourable member for Maroochydore just said, this Government has been in power for five months and the health services in this State have already been wound back. We saw what happened with capital works programs. It is about time the Minister took control and took full responsibility for what is happening in health.

The power crisis goes back six or eight years. The Goss Labor Government was in power for six years, and the electricity industry was completely mucked up. We saw capital works programs for places such as Barcaldine and Emerald in my own electorate wound back and rolled over from Budget to Budget. I note that the member for Fitzroy is in the Chamber. I am sure that he agrees. It was Mike Horan, under a coalition Government, who got those hospitals built in Emerald, Barcaldine and every other place around this State. The current Health Minister will have the honour and glory of opening the facilities the coalition put in place because we had the guts and the tenacity to make the hard moves. Minister Edmond should be ashamed of the policies of her Government that she administers. Earlier this week I heard a rumour that the Minister had talked about resigning because the job is too hard. I suggest that she does not talk about it but just do it. That is what everybody wants to happen. I think it will happen before Christmas. I know for a fact that Peter Beattie is not happy with the situation.

Recently Townsville General Hospital staff were forced to use hand pumps to provide oxygen to patients after a power blackout in the hospital's intensive care unit. That is absolutely shameful. The hospital power crisis was completely unacceptable and required immediate action by the Minister for Health. Shame on the Minister!

I mention the north Queensland medical school, which Mike Horan put in place. That school is about training young doctors in that part of the State. We will see them go into the areas of the State where they want to live and serve. They will better understand the health needs of people in those areas and be able to serve those people and give them a better quality of life and the sort of health service they had become accustomed to for many years under coalition Governments.

I believe that every Queenslanders is entitled to quality health services. I will stand on my digs while I represent the people of the Gregory electorate, and I know that other members on this side of the House will do that for their constituents. We must have quality services. The Minister cannot just keep fobbing the people off. That is exactly what the Minister is doing. The Minister should take control. The Minister should take a leaf out of Mike Horan's book on running the Health Department. Michael Horan made the hard yards. He drove the agenda in the Health Department; the bureaucrats did not. For God's sake, the bureaucrats are only there to administer the policy. The Minister should be leading from the front, but she is bringing up the rear. It is not good enough. The Minister has to implement the Government's policy. She is the captain of the team and she has to lead it. The Minister is not doing that and the people of Queensland will be the losers.

Mr Beanland: She is not up to leading.

Mr JOHNSON: She is not up to leading at all. We had about four Health Ministers over the time of the Goss Government and the same thing will happen in this Beattie Government. The Minister has been a dismal failure and she should resign now.

Time expired.
