



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Hansard 26 August 1999

HEALTH SERVICE

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (6.50 p.m.): I want to start by congratulating the Leader of the Opposition. This has been a brilliant tactic. Whenever one's leadership is under threat, one drags up the joker who is going to challenge one and set him up for a failure. That is what we have seen tonight with the member for Toowoomba South—an absolute failure. It was all masterminded by the Leader of the Opposition. I congratulate him on that.

I thought it was going to be a serious debate. When the Leader of the Opposition was Premier, he never took a question on health. He always duck-shoved it off to his challenger, the member for Toowoomba South, secretly praying that the member for Toowoomba South would fail. He has never let him down. He has been a failure right from the word go.

This should be a censure motion on the member for Toowoomba South and the shadow Health Minister because this morning we saw the Government Whip completely demolish the arguments of the member for Maroochydore. What have we heard tonight?

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr MICKEL: I hear the member for Toowoomba South getting a bit excited. Of course he would. It is tax time and he has discovered that the Federal Government is going to tax brains and he is going to get a rebate.

All we have heard tonight is a blackguarding of the Health bureaucracy which is nobly headed by Dr Robert Stable. He was appointed by us and was kept on as a mercy flight to try to support the member for Toowoomba South so that he would not stuff it up totally. We have him back here, and what is the Opposition doing? Those opposite are blackguarding Dr Stable and all the people in the Health bureaucracy. We have heard a little tonight—

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. This side of the House did not attack any particular bureaucrats or name them. We have the courage and the decency to attack—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HORAN: No, Mr Speaker. We had the courage and the decency to attack the Government and the Minister. This member has insinuated that we attacked the director-general.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MICKEL: I will say this for the member for Toowoomba South: he is brighter than he looks, but then he would have to be. The fact is that the member for Toowoomba South tries to claim credit for the Labor Party public hospital rebuilding program. What the member has never said is that when the funding stream came up, via the cigarette tax in 1992, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Toowoomba South opposed it. There would be no public hospital system if we put up with the National Party's policies in 1992.

The fact is that the member for Toowoomba South could not run a Health budget to save himself. The capital works program was always underspent. In his last year as Minister it was underspent by \$85m.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I remind the member for Logan that they rolled over six years of capital works projects in Barcaldine, Emerald and Clermont.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MICKEL: I thank the campaign director for the member for Toowoomba South. What was the hospital system that had the \$3m overrun? It was the hospital in the member for Toowoomba South's own electorate. It was the hospital in Toowoomba. This occurred while the member for Toowoomba South was the Minister.

The member for Toowoomba South has always been mathematically challenged. Even in the recent leadership bid he could not get to 13 without getting into trouble. The member for Toowoomba South and the member for Surfers Paradise are the great non-deliverers. During 1998 there were 174 people waiting on Category 2 operations in Toowoomba. The member talks about benchmarking. He should apologise to the 174 people who had to wait because of his brilliance. At 1 June 1999 we had reduced that by 100 families in Toowoomba.

The honourable gentleman talks about privatisation. The first two hospitals to be privatised were Noosa and Robina. They were privatised by the member for Toowoomba South. I have already congratulated the member on his genius. Does he want me to keep on demolishing him or will we get on with the job?

The member for Toowoomba South introduced the capital charges which would have ripped \$144m out of the public hospital system. In the Logan electorate it would have ripped out \$5m at the Logan Hospital.

Time expired.
