



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

Hansard 9 June 1999

BURNETT WATER STORAGE

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.42 p.m.): Water is absolutely crucial to the future of the Burnett region. There is no doubt about that. And the delay that this Government has put into the process which we started is stifling opportunity for primary producers in the Burnett, and it is stifling an opportunity for the development of industry and jobs in the Burnett.

What we have seen tonight from Government members is a most unbelievable performance. We have seen the Deputy Premier come into this Parliament with an absolutely mealy-mouthed amendment that means nothing—more processes, more consultation, absolutely no commitment to a timetable whatsoever for the construction of a major storage in the Burnett area. That is something that those people want.

The honourable member for Mackay talked about Mackay. I am not sure whether that will be relevant to the Bundaberg News-Mail tomorrow—nor, probably, will the contribution from the Honourable Minister for Natural Resources. But the contribution from the member for Bundaberg will be most noteworthy and most newsworthy in her electorate.

Some very interesting things have been said tonight by Government members. On the one hand, we have the Minister for Natural Resources saying that the only decision the former Borbidge Government made was to say that the Comet dam would not go ahead. Yet on the other hand, members opposite wax lyrical and carry on about the proper processes that are to be followed. We followed the proper process with regard to the Comet dam. When I became Minister, I followed on from where Howard Hobbs—the Minister who preceded me—left off. I said, "We won't have these people hanging around. We will make a decision to build it or not to build it."

But one thing that the Minister forgot is the Nathan dam, the principles of which—the environmental impact assessment—we ticked off on. We gave support to that particular dam. We ticked off on that particular dam. By ticking off on that project, we gave the private sector proponents the opportunity to go forward and raise money. But do members know what the honourable member for Rockhampton said at the time? "You cannot possibly do this because you've got a WAMP process, and the WAMP process is going to have to precede it." That is what he said. He said that it could not be run concurrently. On the other hand, in the Bundaberg News-Mail on 11 June, the Premier said that, "Where possible, we will run the processes simultaneously." Government members say one thing and profess another thing, but when the wood is put on them they do absolutely nothing.

Members of this Government started questioning the processes that we went through with the Nathan dam. We approved that particular dam. We paved the way for the private sector proponents to go forward and garner their finances. What has happened with that? We still have dillydallying with that WAMP process, and there is still a great deal of uncertainty.

Let us look at the performance of the honourable member for Bundaberg. When I was in Bundaberg last year as the Minister for Natural Resources, I said, "There is no reason whatsoever why we could not construct that dam within five years", because our catchment processes were under way. The Minister for Natural Resources talks about the WAMP process. That timetable was in place when I was the Minister. The preliminary assessment processes were always going to start in the middle of the year 2000. Nothing has changed, except that we had the will to do it.

Members have talked about the Walla Weir. I indicated that, using the principles which were established in the environmental impact assessment process which was done for Stage 1, there was no reason why we could not have had a bag on that weir in April or May of this year. But where is it? The year 2000, 2001 or 2002! Goodness knows what else!

The people in Bundaberg are really starting to question the commitment and the performance of the honourable member for Bundaberg. People have written letters to the local newspaper asking, "Where does the member stand on truth in sentencing?" She stands against it. The other day members debated the divisive apology issue—another issue that has been running in the member's local newspaper. What about her performance and that of the Health Minister on general outpatients? She is equivocating on a commitment. Where is the commitment that we will have the water storage built in the Burnett region within five years? Where are they? They are dingoing out. They stand for absolutely nothing.

I assure you, Mr Speaker, that the people of Bundaberg and the people of the Bundaberg region are going to know about this because, for the first time, they actually had a Government—the Borbidge Government—that was prepared to put in place a timetable and to say that it was going to do something to construct that dam. But what happened? This Government came to power and proved once again that it is just a can't do Government.

Time expired.
