



Speech by

Mr LEN STEPHAN

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Hansard 3 March 1999

GYMPIE FLOODS

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie—NPA) (11.14 p.m.): In the past week or so I have had the honour of representing my electorate in relation to the recent floods. Some of the people involved are to be commended for their attitude and for their actions. For example, Sergeant Terry Kennedy of the Imbil police was very much to the fore. He stated that the creek peaked at 10.6 metres on Tuesday, tearing a path through the eastern side of the town. The 85-metre timber bridge over Yabba Creek, which is the town's major link with Gympie and the rest of the world, bore the brunt of the flood's force. School transport operations used that bridge and an enormous amount of timber went across it. As a result of damage to the bridge, traffic must travel another 15 to 20 kilometres. The cost of that is yet to be determined.

Putting aside the political decisions that have been made, I believe we can look forward to a decision that will have Imbil working as it has done in the past. That is something we should all work together to achieve. The previous Government put aside some money for bridge works. If nothing else, the flood has put paid to the suggestion that the bridge needs repair. Certainly we see now that the bridge does not need repair but replacement.

I know of one dairy farmer in the area who reached the end of his tether when the waters were rising, as I am sure we all would in that situation. All the cattle on the property were forced into an area of about 100 square metres. The milking also had to be done, but under these conditions it was very difficult. The milking sheds were themselves under water and the milk vats had to be filled with water to try to keep them on the ground. One thousand tonnes of silage also went down the river, never to be seen again. I could go on.

I mention the situation of a young married couple who came into the area. They looked around and liked a house that they saw. They asked whether the river would ever come up to the house and they were told that it would not. They looked around and could not see any river, but when the river reached about 15 metres water came into their home. It is not their fault—they were given certain information—but certainly people have to be careful. I believe it will take a long time for them to forget that.

Time expired.
