



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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BURNETT REGION

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (6.26 p.m.): Tonight, this debate is about support for the good people who live in the South Burnett area, those people who time and time again have been stabbed in the back by the Beattie Labor Government in the short 12 months that it has been in power. Nothing demonstrates that more than the decision that the Government made in relation to the three 200-bed jails that were proposed by the coalition Government. What did the Beattie Government do? It proposed a 400-bed jail at Woodford. Also, instead of providing three 200-bed jails, it proposed placing a 500-bed jail at Maryborough, which was one of four areas that were short-listed by the former Government. We support Maryborough receiving some facilities. However, good government is about sharing the facilities among the good, decent people who live in those decentralised communities in our State.

Why on earth would the Beattie Government extend the Woodford prison by 400 cells, making it the biggest high-security prison in Australia? Why on earth would it do that when it could have placed 200-cell jails in centres such as Inglewood, Yarraman and Roma, which would have provided about 80 jobs for about 80 families which would, in turn, have provided extra teachers and extra business for the small businesspeople in those communities? That would have been good government. Why? Because the Premier of this State stabbed the people of Maryborough in the back over their hospital. He had to face a crowd of 2,000 people in the Maryborough Town Hall. He had to do a backflip. This was his payback for the mammoth mistake and bungling of his Health Minister in regard to the Maryborough Hospital. It was also his way of attacking the bush. This Government took away any opportunity for Inglewood, Yarraman or Roma to have a 200-bed jail.

The interesting thing about all of this was that, of the four sites that the coalition had in Inglewood, Yarraman, Roma and Maryborough, the actual site that was top of the list in the Minister's office and the one that he recommended was Yarraman. However, he got done over by the Premier for cynical, sour political reasons. When the mayors of Rosalie and Nanango asked whether the decision regarding the selection of Woodford could be reconsidered, they were not even listened to. The Minister said that he would consult with the people in those rural areas. He did not even bother to consult. However, on the ABC on 26 March, the secretary of the South Burnett branch of the ALP probably summed it up best by saying that the decision to build a 500-bed jail in Maryborough and extend the Woodford prison was a snub for rural Queensland. That is what the decision was about.

Government members do not like the people of the South Burnett. One only has to look at the way that they have turned their backs on the proposal for Yarraman, their lack of support for the Tarong Power Station and the meatworks, and the proposals to downgrade the Nanango Hospital and possibly the Wondai Hospital. They do not care. It is good government to look after those people and it is bad government if, for cynical reasons, one sticks all the resources into one area, as happened with the \$39m Heritage Trail in Ipswich. Why could not some of that money have gone into Yarraman?

This is a cynical, sour Government that is determined not to give anything to an area like the South Burnett, which is non-Labor. The Labor Party does not care that they are good Queensland families, that the kids play cricket on Saturdays and go to the local schools. They are decent, church-going families. This Government is all about feathering its nest, making sure that it pads little areas to win those seats in a cynical drive to retain power. We will stand up for the people of Yarraman. We had

a good Government plan to spread the gravy around. Building a 200-cell jail in a country town is an ideal project, and it would have provided 80 or 90 jobs. That is good government, unlike the decision making that has occurred under the Beattie Government.

We will stand up for the South Burnett, we will stand up for Yarraman and we will deliver good government to regional Queensland because decentralised Queensland has been the strength of Queensland. The Labor Party will be on the nose forever in the South Burnett. No-one will ever forget how it turned its back on Yarraman. It had no need to do that. It would have been a simple job to build a 200-cell jail in that town. It made good business sense and good government sense.

Time expired.
