



Speech by

Mr S. SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard 10 June 1999

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (6.33 p.m.): One of the interesting aspects of a debate such as this is that it will actually be read by the people who count in terms of road transport and other transport infrastructure. And when they read the record of this debate, they will come to regard members opposite as indulging in intellectual dishonesty, claiming false credit and basking in the reflected glory of what the previous coalition Government did. The Minister and other members opposite, including those who have spoken during this debate, are regarded and treated as jokes by the road transport community. The thing about it is that it does not matter how worked up they get in this place, what they actually say—

Mr REEVES: I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the words that we are considered as jokes, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The words were not directed at the member personally. There is no point of order.

Mr SANTORO: It does not matter what those members say or how aggrieved they sound; in the end people will read their words and will have no respect for them.

There is no doubt that transport infrastructure under this Government and, in particular, under this non-performing Minister is going absolutely nowhere if we exclude projects that were planned and started by the coalition. Under this Government, we have a Transport Minister who is running on autopilot, who does not have a clue about the major transport and road problems facing south-east Queensland, and who is relying totally on the advice of a small group of senior public servants—public servants of the calibre of those who dreamt up a Monty Pythonesque underground road through the Daisy Hill State Forest and who played a very helpful, though

inadvertent, role in the demise of the Goss Labor Government.

What sort of record does this Minister have to crow about? His statement this morning was a regurgitation of projects that the Opposition started. He even showed the bad taste of trying to take the credit for the low road toll. The credit belongs to this fellow here next to me, the honourable member for Gregory. Whoever wrote that self-serving and silly speech should be hanging their head in shame. It was the coalition Government, under the energetic advice of my colleague the member for Gregory, which kick-started the Pacific Motorway. It was the coalition that put in place, for the first time in many years, a rolling capital works program for the upgrading of rural roads. It was the coalition that pushed the busways program forward. It was the coalition that got the \$65m from the Federal Government for a light rail system for Brisbane. This Minister and this Government have actually sent the system backwards.

I might add that, in this Government's headlong rush to rewrite history and rename the program Brisbane light rail rather than Briztram, the talk around town that I have heard is that this ran into legal problems due to that name already being taken. The Minister can deny that if it is not correct, and I wait with interest for his response. It was the coalition which successfully finalised the work on the Brisbane Airport rail link after it languished—and I repeat "languished"—under the Goss Labor Government.

What do we have to thank this Minister for? He was the man who killed off the light rail link with the university, thereby compounding the major traffic problems along the whole length of Coronation Drive and the whole of the inner-western suburbs. It was under this Government that the light rail link to Woolloongabba was

mothballed. Where are we going under Labor? About the only transport initiative I can think of is an ugly looking pedestrian bridge proposed between South Bank and the QUT, and I do not think that that will help too much in relieving traffic congestion. We have a Government that is so intent on cuddling up to the Lord Mayor that it has almost abdicated any independent thinking regarding transport planning in the metropolitan region.

The Minister announced the short-listing of companies tendering for the light rail system yesterday, but he knows that, as a result of his axing of the St Lucia link and his ridiculous support for a narrow-gauge system with integration with heavy rail and not with the busways, it will be very difficult for any private sector consortium to make that project work financially.

Mr Bredhauer: That's rubbish.

Mr SANTORO: The Minister says "rubbish". We will see who is right. I wait with increasing interest to see exactly what comes out of that botched exercise of bureaucratic and ministerial ineptitude, especially if—as I suspect—the companies want extra financial support from the taxpayers in the form of so-called community service obligation payments.

Government members interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Members at the back of the Chamber are interjecting inanely. I could tell who had spoken to the transport community before I entered this debate. I could tell who had spoken to the people who are going to make it happen. I challenge the Minister to come into this House later and prove that what I have said tonight is wrong.

This is a Minister and a Government who are living off the hard work and the initiatives of the previous Government. We have a Minister without a new idea in his head, who is nothing more than a serial plagiarist of ideas. Over the next months, I am sure that this House will see more and more attention being directed to the non-performance of this Minister, because he cannot continue much longer living off the ideas and the hard work of the previous coalition Government and, in particular, the honourable member for Gregory, who makes the Minister look like an intellectual minion, an ideas minion, a performance minion and a physical minion when it comes to delivering good transport infrastructure. Already the Minister is a failure after one year. Despite what we left for him, he is a failure.

Time expired.
