



Speech by

**Mr S. ROBERTSON**

**MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK**

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Hansard 8 June 1999

**NELLY BAY DEVELOPMENT, MAGNETIC ISLAND**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.24 p.m.): This morning, when I read the Courier-Mail article stating that the Leader of the Opposition had finally come to the realisation that he and his team have not been performing over the past 12 months and that today was a new day for the Opposition, I thought that, finally, after 12 months of having no Opposition in this place, we would see them actually do something. I thought: "This is probably going to be a good day. It might make Parliament a bit interesting and exciting." However, within the first hour of today's sitting of Parliament what did the new, reinvigorated Opposition come up with? A motion for a debate tonight that supported the Government! Is that the best they can do? How much thought went into that?

That not only demonstrates a complete lack of imagination and understanding of what Opposition is all about; it also demonstrates the Opposition's absolute disregard for proper debate and consideration of issues in this place. The Opposition came up with a motion that supports what the Government is doing; the subplot is to pick off one or two Government members. That is the best they can do! There are many issues about which Queenslanders really care, yet all members opposite want to do is pick on a couple of individual members. And for what? Standing up for their electorates! That has suddenly become a crime in this place. I might be a bit confused, but as a person who has taken his majority support from 53% to 60% over three elections, I thought I might have something to contribute in terms of what it means to look after one's electorate. We would have to suggest that I might have some runs on the board, but that is clearly not the case; members opposite believe that all of the things in which I believe in terms of standing up for our electorate is some sort of cardinal sin, yet at the same time they are supporting the Government of the day. We cannot get more confused than that.

It can only be a matter of time before the member for Surfers Paradise spends a bit more time in his electorate and learns what representing the people who elected him is all about. That is something that he has clearly forgotten. Clearly, the performance today by this new reinvigorated Opposition—with its new beginning and new dawn, as announced in the Courier-Mail—will obviously be the downfall of the Leader of the Opposition. Fancy having a debate tonight and wasting an hour of this Parliament's time on a motion supporting the Government! We cannot get any more ridiculous than that.

What is the practical effect of this? The practical effect of the strategy adopted by the Opposition can perhaps be explained by the fact that on this side of the House we have 45 seats, at the last election members opposite were decimated, and, on the basis of the call for proper representation in local areas, we have One Nation members at the back of the Chamber. Honourable members would have thought that someone who has been in this place as long as the Leader of the Opposition has would have learnt a few things, but clearly that is not the case.

**One Nation Party members** interjected.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I got 60%, with a 9% swing. Sorry, guys, I won, you lost.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I think it is a wonderful attitude.

I have been to Nelly Bay and I have met with the people who have raised concerns. I was at the Community Cabinet meeting. There is no doubt that every member in this place, including the two members whom the Opposition is singling out, supports the Nelly Bay development. However, when they come into this place they have a responsibility to represent the interests of their electors. They are guilty of no more than that. The sooner that members opposite realise what democratic representation is all about, the better off they will be. Until then, we will be here, they will be there, and, unfortunately, One Nation members will continue to be at the back of the Chamber.

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