



Speech by

Mr T. MALONE

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Hansard 12 November 1999

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
Minister for Emergency Services

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (9.47 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in this House, the Minister for Emergency Services delivered what could only be described as a callous and gutless attack on my personal integrity and my responsibility as a member of this Legislative Assembly. How dare the Minister attempt to deny me my absolute right under the Westminster system of Government to question a Minister of the Crown during question time on a matter pertaining to her portfolio!

On Tuesday I questioned the Minister about why an ambulance took more than three hours to attend to a 92-year-old lady who had broken her arm. As a member of this Assembly and also as shadow Minister for Emergency Services, I have an absolute right to seek an explanation. Instead, the Minister, after approaching me personally after question time, delivered a tirade of abuse and chose to stand in this House yesterday and accuse me of distorting the truth, promoting a media campaign against her and denigrating the work of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

Let me make this very clear: I did not issue a media release on this issue, I did not hold a media conference, nor did I influence the media to follow up this issue. All I did was ask a question of the Minister on this issue in Parliament, and I passionately defend my right to do that. For the Minister to suggest that I was wrong in doing that and that I should have merely spoken to her personally on this matter defies all sense. Many times I have communicated with this Minister on other issues without raising those matters in the House. In fact, when the Minister attempted to answer my question on Tuesday, she inquired whether I was referring to a case involving a Mrs Mason, about whom I had previously communicated.

Yesterday's ministerial statement by the Minister was an attack on me that was nothing short of a disgraceful and incompetent display by a Minister proving that she is totally unworthy of the high office bestowed on her by the convention of the Westminster system of Government. If this Minister or any other Minister of the Beattie Labor administration thinks they can avoid scrutiny in the true democratic process, I suggest that they should seriously consider their immediate political future, because one thing is sure: I will not back down from my responsibility as a duly elected representative of this House to scrutinise, question, inquire and probe into the Government of the day and do so with pride and integrity.
