



Speech by
Mr TERRY SULLIVAN
MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

Hansard 10 November 1999

ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING LISTS

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (6.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister's amendment. Firstly, I would like to comment on what the member for Burnett said. I have had the privilege of travelling with the current Minister on two or three occasions, I think, to the South Burnett and Bundaberg health facilities. The Bundaberg Hospital outpatients clinic has not closed. The Bundaberg outpatients clinic is new and three times larger.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SULLIVAN: What has closed is the private part-time GP service. And if the "kid from Callide" would close his mouth for a minute, he would know that, in February 1996, when Mr Borbidge came to Government, that service was operating for 22.5 hours a week. By the end of Mr Borbidge's term, it was operating for nine hours a week. And the member for Burnett, a senior Minister in that Government, did not raise this issue once in the Parliament. He made not one speech, not one two-minute speech, not one Adjournment debate speech. So the member for Callide ought to keep quiet in shame, because the member for Burnett—as a senior Minister—knew that, because of the way in which that service was set up, it was being phased out. What is there now is an improved outpatients clinic.

Mr SLACK: I rise to a point of order. I put it on the record that I wrote to the Health Minister and approached the then Health Minister several times about that issue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will not debate the issue.

Mr SULLIVAN: I thank the member for Burnett for confirming, from his own mouth, that not once did he raise in this Parliament the concerns of his constituents. He is party to a petition which deliberately misrepresents the truth.

Mr Seeney: He's doing it now.

Mr SULLIVAN: Of course, he is doing it now. He knows that the private GP service has closed and the outpatients clinic is new, three times bigger and offering extended services.

The member for Gregory said that, under the coalition, they had a health service that was run by Government, not by bureaucrats. That is true. That is not a boast. That is an admission of incompetence. We know that the member for Toowoomba South issued directives to the District Health Service in Toowoomba and instructed them on what they would or would not do. As well, between March and July 1996, he made the decision to take the community health services out of the Prince Charles Hospital and move them back to the RBH, so that the ageing population in the suburbs would have to travel all the way in along Bowen Bridge Road so that the "Medical Mafia" at RBH would feel comfortable.

Mr Borbidge: "Medical Mafia"?

Mr SULLIVAN: The Leader of the Opposition heard me correctly. The member for Gregory knows that it was his colleague, the member for Toowoomba South, who made those decisions, not based on medical need—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SULLIVAN: The member for Gregory stands condemned, because the 10-year hospital plan which was worked out by medicos throughout Brisbane said that those services should be moved to where the growing population is. And it was the politicians—not the bureaucracy, which was the medical profession—who made the decision to keep them at RBH, which meant that people in Caboolture now have to travel to RBH rather than to facilities at ChermSIDE. So the member for Gregory stands condemned by his own admission. And as for the shadow Minister for Health—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory!

Mr SULLIVAN: I admired the shadow Minister for Health for being the first person, to my knowledge, to use a computer in this Chamber for her day-to-day work. Yet today she admitted that she could not access the Internet and actually read the figures which were on the Internet and which are in this report. Is that incompetence or deliberate misleading?

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. I did not make that claim. I said that the outpatient specialist figures are not on the Internet.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr SULLIVAN: If, in fact, the member did not want to go to the Internet, she could do what any person here could do, that is, go to one of the 33 hospitals and see on display there the report of the waiting list. This occurred under the Labor Government. It was never there under the coalition. Mr Borbidge is smiling, because he knows that it was the Cabinet decision—or maybe it was not; maybe it was just the member for Toowoomba South, as Minister, who made the decision not to publish those figures. Near the entrance to the main block at the Prince Charles Hospital is a display area showing the waiting list—publicly available for everyone to see.

Time expired.
