



Speech by

Mr W. BAUMANN

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard 1 June 2000

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

Mr BAUMANN (Albert—NPA) (6.34 p.m.): In rising to support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Toowoomba South, the shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services, I would like to endorse the words of the member for Nerang and take the opportunity to once again bring to the Minister's attention the concerns of almost 3,000 local residents of the Coomera police district and highlight some of the incidents of recent times that exacerbate the policing issues of our area. The continuing loutish behaviour of a small group of young people in and around Coomera's local streets not only creates fear in the minds of our senior citizens but also creates an atmosphere of doubt and concern in the minds of the parents of young families who also make up a large portion of that area's population.

Some acts of vandalism and, more seriously, downright destruction of local education and park facilities are not only costly but also are very disruptive and upsetting to our educators, students and public alike. Once again, I remind the Minister of my approaches to him in relation to getting a school-based police officer for the Helensvale State High School and the benefits of a police presence in this area. This lack of police presence in the most rapidly growing area in Australia led to the petition by almost 3,000 local residents that was tabled by me in the House some three months ago.

This same Police Minister, on assuming the Ministry some two years ago, bulldozed and elbowed his way to the control levers. That is an admirable concept, a Minister actually in control. Although I realise that in recent times the Minister has suffered fairly serious ill health and perhaps may not have had his hands on the levers, I point out that for at least one night in recent weeks the Southport Police Station, which is a 24-hour station, was not manned; it was unattended. Why? The officers were all off sick. "Obviously, the station must have rostering problems", the Minister could say, or could this indicate an understaffing problem? In another instance, officers were told to complete duties that included overtime but were not paid. I ask the Minister: how does that affect morale? I would say that it is enough to make a police officer sick.

A Government member interjected.

Mr BAUMANN: I am not being uncharitable at all. The headlines in local newspapers of recent times say it all: "Cop shop plea"—which is a headline taken from the local newspaper of the Minister's electorate—"Coomera wants 24-hour police", "Locals sign petition for 24-hour police", "Horan joins call for more police", "Hinterland call for more police", "Police bid to boost numbers slammed" and "More police not needed: Barton". But what about this gem: "Who's behind Coomera's thin blue line?". I will not read into Hansard all of this letter to the editor of the Gold Coast Bulletin of 25 April in relation to a stance taken by the honourable member for Toowoomba South and me, but it reads in part—

"Both stances smack of nothing less than political opportunism. The fact is that Coomera did not even have a police station until the Goss Labor Government built it in 1991."

I have a bit of information for the Minister. I was born and raised in the district just about 58 years ago and there was a police station there then. That will bring the Minister up to date on the history of that area.

I want to say another thing to the Minister, because I will not be totally unkind. I thank the Goss Government for following through and upgrading the Coomera Police Station. However, the plans and

financial arrangements for that project were put in place by my predecessor, the National Party representative for Albert, Mr Ivan Gibbs, some time previously. Back in those days, it was manned with 18 general duties police—and that was the Minister's description. Since then the Minister has raised that number to 19. However, that does not mean, as the Honourable Russell Cooper says, a warm body actually there to take up that position. But still, that was in 1993. It is now 2000 and still that station has the same number of staff.

To finish off, I refer to this little gem headed "Yes Minister, now's the time for action", which states—

"Our police personnel are dedicated, hardworking people and they deserve better support from our politicians.

The police and residents have had enough so please acknowledge our problem and don't brush this under the carpet.

It will not go away."

Time expired.
