



Speech by

DAVID DALGLEISH

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Hansard 5 October 2000

TRANSPORT [BUSWAY AND LIGHT RAIL] AMENDMENT BILL

Mr DALGLEISH (Hervey Bay—CCAQ) (12.31 p.m.): My City Country Alliance colleagues and I are pleased to see that the Government is planning ahead for the future traffic growth in the south-east Queensland region. I support the plans for further busways and light rail projects to reduce the congestion on the roads and to reduce the environmental impact of traffic.

Although the Bill relates to other urban parts of the State, there is no doubt that the future demand upon the city's access roads is the main purpose of the Bill. Future demand will escalate the current traffic problems on the road. Essentially, the Bill allows for busways and light rail systems to be developed in order to counteract the expansion and demands of traffic.

It is also obvious that there is a general move away from rural areas to the city areas. The Minister in his second-reading speech stated that people have realised the benefits of inner-city living. I find that to be a sad reflection upon the failure of successive Governments to keep rural and regional communities alive. It amazes me that Governments, both Labor and coalition—because in practice they are both the same—spend so much time trying to reduce the crowding problems of our overgrown cities while contributing to the problem by actively destroying rural and regional communities. Globalisation, deregulation, National Competition Policy, privatisation, red tape and a lack of essential services continue to force productive people off the land and into the already overcrowded cities. I do not think that all the inner-city growth is due to people realising the benefits of inner-city living but rather that it was made so damned hard for them to survive in the bush that they had no choice.

My concerns about the Bill relate to the rights of private landowners. Clauses 180ZZZO to 180ZZZZB deal with the entry onto land to investigate if it is suitable for the development of light rail or busways. These clauses erode the rights of private landowners. Other aspects of the Bill also override the rights of freehold landowners, including clause 180C and clause 180ZN, which also allow persons connected with the project to enter and investigate and test land for light rail or busway purposes. However, I acknowledge that there are some safeguards in place in the Bill that state that, for that to occur, the occupier of the land must first be advised in writing of this intention or that there must be an attempt to contact the landowners before that investigation occurs. When discussing that issue in the Alert Digest, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee referred to a lack of merit review provisions in the Bill. That committee is also concerned about the rights of landowners and the lack of appeal provisions in the Bill.

The Beattie Labor Government does not care about overturning the rights of freehold titleholders. That was shown clearly in the South Bank incident. After the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the landowners, the Beattie Labor Government simply changed the rules by forcing legislation through Parliament—with the active assistance of their partners in theft, the good old coalition—so that they could acquire land compulsorily. Those parties also passed a Bill to allow the State's land acquisition powers to be used for the benefit of third parties. That was supposed to contribute to jobs and industry for Queensland. Yet we hear that the Comalco plant in Gladstone is to be built with imported equipment and labour with the blessing of this Government, thus providing thousands of jobs for overseas companies whilst Queensland's economy is struggling and our skilled workers are hitting the dole queues.

Although I agree with the future planning for busways and rail networks to relieve the transport problems of the inner city, I do not agree with this Government's arrogant attitude when it comes to disrupting Mr and Mrs average Queenslander. The people are sick of Government interference in their lives. Surely the heavy weight of the public system can be moved in such a way that it is respectful and considerate of the bloke who pays for its existence.

We support the development of the busways and light rail networks, but we have reservations about the lack of appropriate compensation provisions and concerns about the erosion of the right of freehold title. However, I use this opportunity to thank the Minister for the efforts that he has put into Hervey Bay and the roadworks that have been achieved up there. We cannot always agree on everything, but I thank the Minister for what he has done in my district.

Mr Bredhauer: Happy to oblige you.

Mr DALGLEISH: The next time the Minister is looking at areas in which to put in a rail system, the Minister should look at Hervey Bay. The people of Hervey Bay would be very pleased to see the train return to Hervey Bay. Maybe we could connect it with the Torbanlea/Howard district so that those people out there can have some form of public transport, which they are seriously lacking.
