



Speech by

**VAUGHAN JOHNSON**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Hansard 20 July 2000

**MR V. O'ROURKE**

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (10.12 a.m.): We heard in the House this morning a ministerial statement delivered by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads in relation to the impending retirement of Vince O'Rourke as Chief Executive of Queensland Rail. I would just like to place on record today the coalition's support for what the Minister had to say this morning. Vince O'Rourke, as the Minister said, came to Queensland back in October 1990 to be the last Commissioner for Queensland Rail in this State.

**Mr Hamill:** He was a good appointment, wasn't he?

**Mr JOHNSON:** He certainly was. I will applaud that. He was appointed CEO of Queensland Rail on 1 July 1991. Since then we have witnessed massive change in Queensland Rail inclusive of the corporatisation, thus, a defined change in management with the implementation of the board structure which changed the management procedure of this great organisation, most of the time with Neville Blunt, who was the chair of that board. Together these two men certainly had a great vision for Queensland Rail. Between these two men they prospered Queensland Rail into one of the greatest narrow gauge networks in the world.

Under Vince O'Rourke's stewardship, we saw QR launch into change in every direction. As the Minister said, we saw that in the introduction of the tilt train; the upgrade of the urban network here in south-east Queensland; Traveltrain, which saw the promotion of tourism in this State and also with the promotion of the Spirit of the Outback, the Queenslander and other Traveltrains in this State; the joint venture partnership between Venice-Simplon and Orient Express—the Great South Pacific Express—as well as our Cattletrain concept, which is still the only railway in Australia today that has livestock freight; and also the successful coal and mineral division of QR, which last year carried some 105 million tonnes of coal mineral.

One of Vince O'Rourke's greatest skills was in his management of industrial relations. As Minister, I had great respect for him. In closing—and I know my time has expired—as the Minister has said today, Vince O'Rourke has many enduring characteristics. I can tell honourable members that he outstayed many of us on many a night. I thought I could stay, but Vince O'Rourke certainly left me behind on many occasions. He is a great man—a great man for QR. On behalf of the coalition, I wish him and Ailsa well in their impending retirement.

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