



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 11 September 2001

LAND SLIPS, BLACKBUTT RANGE

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (7.06 p.m.): The Blackbutt Range section of the D'Aguilar Highway has been a bone of contention since I was elected to parliament in 1998. Constituents have often complained about the lack of safety features and the need for an additional overtaking lane, which the Department of Main Roads has assured me is on its RIP. Now it seems that this treacherous piece of road has another problem, and that could be possible landslides. These landslides look imminent. There are fractures in the rock face that line the edges of the road. The picture I am holding of a rock and from where it fell is quite scary. I am now holding a picture of a boulder that fell close to the highway from the steep banks. I had to ask myself how this could happen. Members might notice that in this photo the boulder is as high as a man. It is a terrible thought that something like that could fall down and crash into a vehicle. There is not very far to go except downwards on the opposite side of the road.

In a distance of just over a kilometre, I photographed approximately 15 slips on the side of the mountain, and not small ones. I left them out because I ran out of film, and I did not complete the whole of the mountain. So there were a lot there. Over a four-day period in February 2001 that section had 188.6 millimetres of rain. The average rainfall in the area for February is 125.8, yet in the four-day period alone it exceeded the average rainfall for that particular month. Until 6 September we virtually had no rain. So this rock fell with the smallest amount of rain and wind. Until 6 September 2001, 2,250 vehicles travelled long the Blackbutt Range section of the D'Aguilar Highway. Seventy-six per cent were light and towing vehicles and 23 were heavy vehicles. On average, over 2,000 vehicles travel on that road yearly and this is growing faster and faster. Tarong Energy is a major user of that road as well and the heavy equipment that goes along there, if stopped one day, would be hazardous to the power supply.

This is the main entrance and exit to and from the Burnett to Brisbane. If this road were cut due to landslides, which is looking possible, travellers, residents and business suppliers would have to go through Toowoomba or Gympie to get to the electorate. This is the most dangerous road in my electorate, if not one of the most dangerous roads in the state of Queensland. The price of fixing the problem on this road should not be a life. After every windstorm or every rainy day debris is cleared from the road by volunteers. There are large trees perched precariously high up on the cut-away banks with their roots exposed, and a windstorm has the potential to create enormous chaos.

What is happening on the downhill side of the road? Who knows. I do not. I would like it put on the record that the concerns brought to me by several constituents have been brought to the minister's attention. It is essential that the minister is aware of the growing concern. I seek leave to table this photograph.

Leave granted.

Time expired.
