



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL, ^{MLA}
STATE MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Hansard 12 December 2001

CENSURE OF MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (6.41 p.m.): This is not a motion of censure of the Minister for Health at all. It is a motion to try to revive the political health of the Leader of the Opposition. The reason: the previous speaker, the speaker prior to that and the speaker who will come after me. That is what this is all about.

Last year, when the Leader of the Opposition was trying to sandbag the former member for Surfers Paradise, he pulled a health stunt and came a gutser, and he will come a gutser again tonight. There is no doubt that the members for Southern Downs and Callide as a duo are breathing down the neck of the Leader of the Opposition. And why wouldn't they be? In the opinion polls the Leader of the Opposition has come down from 23 per cent to eight per cent. What a remarkable achievement! We will need binoculars to find him in the next poll. He will have to use a microscope to find his vote.

What are the charges brought against the Minister for Health? That she stood up for staff.

It's about time that the Opposition stood by the hospital staff and said a few decent things about them, the people who are achieving increased throughput and doing a great deal for Queenslanders.

Do any members disagree with that? They shouldn't, because that was a statement by the Leader of the Opposition in 1997—the very thing he accuses the minister of tonight. We will hear a lot more about hypocrisy, because the Leader of the Opposition is riddled with it. He talks about whistleblowers. Does the name Dr Denaro mean anything to him? It should; the Leader of the Opposition is the one who tried to get rid of him when he blew the whistle on the Leader of the Opposition over the Gold Coast Hospital. Does the name Dr Senewiratne mean anything to him? A newspaper article reported him as saying—

... Mr Horan had supported his stand while he was Opposition health spokesman.

'But now the ball-game has changed, when I turn up the heat on this government for similar reasons, all hell breaks loose. It's hypocrisy.

There we have it, the Leader of the Opposition stripped threadbare in front of the two contenders and in front of this parliament tonight.

Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said that we were spending too much money. Of course we are. We have increased the health budget from \$3 billion under him to \$4 billion under us. Today he said, 'But you're taxing too much.' This is the joker who brought in the Horan hospital tax, which was going to rip millions of dollars from services at the Logan Hospital. The only thing he is consistent about is his inconsistency. That is about it. The Leader of the Opposition is all over the shop depending on which day it is. But I do know this: the further he gets away from the advice of Dr Stable the worse he gets. When Dr Stable took over that portfolio, he had black hair. Overnight he went prematurely grey, trying to keep up with the Leader of the Opposition.

Tonight we have heard something about the intensivist at the Logan Hospital. Why was the intensivist not there? The Leader of the Opposition did not tell us that he got a job at the Mater Hospital. Why? Because the Mater Hospital has a public and a private hospital! They use it to top up their income. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition did not talk about maternity. He should have talked about it, because when he was the Health Minister he wanted to rip out of the Logan Hospital—with the youngest population in Queensland—the maternity section. How many people would be disadvantaged by that today? Some 250 mothers a month have babies at the Logan Hospital, yet this joker wanted to take away the health services. You are a joke. You are a completely hopeless joke.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members should not engage in name calling.

Mr MICKEL: I apologise. I withdraw right away.

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. I find the member's remarks that I wanted to rip the maternity section out of the Logan Hospital totally untrue. They are a total lie. I find them offensive, and I ask that they be totally withdrawn.

Mr MICKEL: Mr Speaker, they are available in the *Southern Star*, but if it is too cute for him tonight I will withdraw it. What he cannot get his head around is this: since he was the Health Minister in 1998-99 the health budget in Logan has gone up by 9.1 per cent; in the next year, 14.7 per cent; and in 2000-01, 29.2 per cent over his budget. We are providing better services, because we understand the area. We know what it is like to live in the outer metropolitan areas. All the member wanted to do, in spite of his denial—he should have another look at the *Southern Star*—was rip out the services.
