



Speech by

Hon. K. LINGARD

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard 1 August 2001

APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (5.43 p.m.): I noted the altercation between the Minister for Transport and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. On behalf of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition I table this document which states—

A Beattie Labor Government will introduce new diesel powered Tilt Trains to double the number of Brisbane to Cairns rail services and cut travelling time from 32 hours to 20 hours.

This is the pre-election release that was authorised by Mike Kaiser. I table that because it obviously vindicates the statements of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the promise was most definitely 20 hours.

I am concerned about what happened at estimates in relation to school buses. The continual fob of the ALP government pre-election and at present shows that we have to have a major tragedy on a school bus before something is going to be done about seatbelts or the problem of students standing on school buses. There is no doubt that, if the government limits the number of students standing on buses or if it says that seatbelts must be introduced into school buses, it will cost the government money. However, the government does not worry about telling private bus companies that they must have seatbelts and it does not worry about telling car manufacturers that they must have seatbelts, because that does not cost the government money; that is something which must be implemented by the private sector. So we continue to see the ALP government fobbing about the problem of school buses.

This is not just something that was raised in the Beaudesert electorate by a group called the Bus Action Committee; this has been around for a while. I note that the member for Fitzroy is in the chamber. He was involved in an altercation about exactly the same thing. But still we see the ALP government not doing anything. I see in estimates that Mr Bredhauer said in answer to a question from the shadow minister for transport—

No. The commitment that we made prior to the last election was to establish the task force and then to work on its recommendations.

The ALP government could find itself in the extremely embarrassing situation very soon in which there is a major accident and all of these statements made by the Minister for Transport are going to come back to haunt him. There has been continuing concern, firstly, about the number of students standing on school buses that are travelling in areas which have speed limits of 100 kilometres per hour. This was a real issue before the last election, especially in the area of Beaudesert where we had some very aggressive lobbyists. One lady who comes to mind has now written to me. She states—

So far, I've been banned from speaking to the entire Queensland Transport Department via a voicemail message left by Steve Bredhauer, because, as he said in the voicemail message—he took exception to a radio interview I did on 4BC. Questions I put directly to Peter Beattie about the basis of that ban remain unanswered to this day. My application to join the Labor Party has been rejected—and despite asking the question 'why?' repeatedly ... not one single, solitary coherent reason has ever been given to me.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr LINGARD: No, she has not applied to come into ours. Then the other day this lady and another lady who stood at the last election were not even allowed to hear the bringing down of the interim task force report. They were held outside by two security people. They were not allowed to even

go to the bringing down of the task force report. They are not allowed into the ALP, and that is okay. But now they are not allowed to talk to the Transport Department. Of course, Steve Bredhauer said that it was not on until I produced in this parliament a copy of that particular document.

What did we see before the last election? We saw a whole lot of interim measures to try to fob off this issue of school buses. We saw the minister say that students can now stand on buses not for 20 kilometres but for 18 kilometres. He limited the distances that a bus can travel with children standing. What else did we see before the last election? We saw that he said that buses can no longer travel at 100 kilometres per hour. They can travel at 80 kilometres per hour, but they can still travel in areas with speed limits of 100 kilometres per hour. That is an absolutely ridiculous situation.

Then before the last election we saw a continual fob about the limitations of certain areas. We in the opposition have always said that surely the minister can extend the policy of limiting students standing on buses that travel in dangerous areas. Mount Tamborine and areas around Atherton would be typical examples. Surely he could limit students standing on buses that travel on roads that have other traffic travelling at 100 kilometres per hour, but nothing has been done except in the area of Beaudesert where the Bus Action Committee was working.

Time expired.
