



Speech by

ELISA ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Hansard 11 April 2002

GYMPIE HOSPITAL

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—ONP) (7.10 p.m.): This morning I spoke in this House about the way in which the people of my electorate have been, and are continuing to be, deceived by this government. On 16 May last year, on two occasions, the Minister for Health said, 'Under the Beattie government, services have been enhanced at the Gympie Hospital.' I will not be gagged against speaking the truth because some minister has their feelings hurt. If someone does the wrong thing by the people, then that person has to be big enough to face the consequences.

The number of Gympie residents who are sent to hospitals in other districts is growing daily. Women are told that they cannot have their children at Gympie; patients are told to go to their GPs rather than to their hospital. How on earth can the status of the Gympie Hospital not have been downgraded when previously nearly every Gympie resident was born at the Gympie Hospital? If people were not having something as major as a transplant, they were treated at Gympie.

I raised in the House this morning the fact that the truth had not been told to my constituents. An untruth is an untruth—full stop! Whether you wish to describe it as stretching the truth or providing a false statement or handling the truth carelessly, it all means the same thing. I will not pretend it is anything but.

The minister has been accused of telling untruths in this House before, and a particular nurse's name springs to mind. This is not the first time and I dare say it will not be last. I have retracted the word 'lie' from my description of the minister's treatment of my constituents. The word may be gone but the intent still remains.

I may be relatively new to this place; I do not have a huge party machine behind me to hold my hand and tell me what to say and what not to say; and I may not use the correct parliamentary etiquette at all times. However, I stand here as an honest person who stands up for people who do not otherwise have their say in this House. If the people of my electorate believe that they are not being told the truth by their ministers, then so be it. I am the voice of the people in my electorate. If ministers do not like being told how they are perceived by the people of Queensland, then they should get out of the business.

Mrs Edmond: They threw you out of the meeting!

Miss ELISA ROBERTS: Point of order. I walked out because the minister's staff were typically useless.

This House is supposed to be a place of democracy, but it clearly is not. In a democracy all people are treated equally. It appears that is not the case in this House. It makes me ill to continually hear about the way this government treats rural Queenslanders. The plight of rural and regional Queenslanders and the decline of their rightful services is beyond belief. What on earth can rural Queenslanders have done to the members of this government to deserve to be treated with such disdain? Do not ever forget that rural and regional Australians have been the backbone of this nation since its inception. They will not lie down and take this treatment without a fight. It is about time some of the Labor mob shed a few tears for them!
