



Speech by
Ray Hopper

MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS

Hansard Wednesday, 21 February 2007

MOTION: BEATTIE LABOR GOVERNMENT

Mr HOPPER (6.07 pm): I listened with interest to that five-minute speech by the minister for transport. It simply amazes me. This is the very same minister who had a shot at me this morning about asking silly questions in the House. I have a couple of questions for him. How many highways has the government built since he has been minister? Over the past eight years, how many highways has this government built in Queensland? I have another question. What has the minister done with the \$225 million that was allocated by the Howard government to flood-proof the Bruce Highway at Tully? For the past seven months the minister has sat on that. For three weeks the people in that area were locked out of Cairns with no bread on their shelves because of the floods. The minister has received money from the federal government for that work, but he has done nothing. That is just the start.

Mr Lucas: Ask me a question tomorrow morning about that.

Mr HOPPER: Let us compare some track records.

Mr Lucas: Have the guts to ask me a question tomorrow morning. I'll tell you about the federal government.

Mr HOPPER: Listen to the minister squawk now. The minister has done nothing for Queensland.

Mr Lucas: Ask me whether they are going to approve the work we're doing. You have the guts to do that.

Mr HOPPER: The minister is one of the dud ministers of the Beattie government and he knows he is a dud. Let us compare the track records of Labor governments with conservative governments. Between 1956 and 1964, 12 major dams were built.

Mr Lucas: You are one of the greatest duds who has ever sat in this place. Ask me a question tomorrow morning about it. I'll be happy to take it. You don't want to do that, though, do you.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, I would like to thank you both for waking up the chamber. Could we get back to it without so much shouting.

Mr HOPPER: Twelve major dams were built by Water Commissioner—

Mr Lucas: You ask me a question about any federally funded road and I'll give you the story on it.

Mr HOPPER: Mr Speaker, I would like to hear myself speak without the interjections.

Mr Horan: What about all of that money you're sitting on for Ipswich Road?

Mr Lucas: Ask it all tomorrow. I'll give you a whole day.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can the member for Toowoomba South give his member a go.

Mr HOPPER: Twelve dams were built by Water Commissioner Fred Haigh in 18 years under united conservative governments. How many dams has the government built in the last 18 years? One, the

Paradise Dam. We announced it and this government had to build it. That is the only piece of water infrastructure built in Queensland in the last 18 years of Labor governments.

History describes the economic development achieved by Queensland conservative governments very positively, particularly those achievements of previous united conservative governments during which time the nation saw Queensland surge ahead and become the leader in economic development and infrastructure provision. Time does not permit me to outline in detail the various massive infrastructure projects constructed under united conservative governments. Suffice to say, construction included ports, rail electrification, the South East Freeway, a network of decentralised highways, bridges, water storages, powers stations, transmission networks, hospitals, schools and universities.

Infrastructure stagnation occurred under the Goss government. Queenslanders, particularly south-east Queenslanders, would clearly remember it was Wayne Goss, assisted by his chief of staff, Kevin Rudd, who cancelled the construction of the Wolffdene Dam. The Wolffdene Dam would have held as much water as Wivenhoe. Have a look at what happened to the Hinze Dam just before Christmas. It was overflowing. It is the same catchment area. So if that dam had been built Brisbane would not be being forced to drink recycled sewage. Every Labor voter in Brisbane who voted for these people has voted to drink recycled sewage. That is what this government, through its lack of infrastructure, is going to force on the people of south-east Queensland, and that simply disgusts me.

This government has rested on its laurels. It has sat on its hands. It has done nothing. It has built no dams. It has put no water infrastructure in place. Fifteen hundred people a week are moving to Queensland and we heard Henry Palaszczuk say, 'We don't have to build a dam until 2050.' They were his exact words. Look at what is happening now. You cannot have a farm and bring a truck load of cattle in every week without putting infrastructure in place, because they will starve to death. That is exactly what will happen.

We can thank Kevin Rudd and this Beattie government when Brisbane runs out of water. Anna Bligh, the Minister for Infrastructure, and the Premier, Peter Beattie, must be on their knees every night praying for 10 or 12 inches of rain in the Crows Nest area because that is the only thing that will save the people of Brisbane. We will be forced to drink recycled sewage because of their lack of effort.

Queenslanders had a short reprieve when the Borbidge-Sheldon government was elected to power. Let us have a quick look at what it achieved: a \$4.8 billion five-year road program—the minister for transport can squawk. Have a look at that record in just two years. Have a look at what happened with the South East Freeway. We were given the reins of government and we put infrastructure in place because a united conservative government had the runs on the board. We have the runs on the board and we will provide for the people of Queensland.