



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Queensland: State Labor Government

SPEECH

Wednesday, 1 March 2006

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Ciobo, Steven, MP

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Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff) (9.51 am)—I am pleased to rise today to talk about a decision that has been made by the state Labor member for Gaven, Robert Poole. The decision that pleases me is that Robert Poole has decided to resign from the Queensland parliament—the wisest decision he has taken since being elected to the seat a number of years ago. The people of Gaven, a good number of whom live in my federal electorate of Moncrieff, have been without a voice in the Queensland state parliament for months and months. This state Labor MP has dominated media headlines in recent days after the Queensland Labor Premier, Peter Beattie, gave the go-ahead for this state Labor MP to reside in Thailand for the next three months because he needed knee surgery.

That begs the question: did this state Labor MP decide to go to Thailand to have his knee operation because he has such little faith in the Queensland health system? It is widely known that the Queensland health system is now one of the worst in this country. Unfortunately, the Beattie state Labor government's priorities have been on all the wrong things. Instead of putting money into the health system, into infrastructure and into roads, the Beattie Labor government is squandering billions of dollars of revenue flowing from the federal government's GST and from financial assistance grants. It is not putting money into the kinds of services that the community is desperately crying out for. To rub salt into the wound, the state Labor MP, Robert Poole, decided that he would spend money on another trip to Thailand—his sixth, I think, in a period of two years.

On this occasion, after public outcry and intensive lobbying by his own side, the Premier has finally done a backflip on his position and decided that Robert Poole needed to return to state parliament by the first week in April or resign. Fortunately, Robert Poole has decided to resign. I welcome his resignation. I think it is important that the people of Gaven have a strong voice in the state parliament, and I welcome the opportunity for the conservative parties to bide their time and put forward an effective plan to argue to the people of Gaven why we should be worthy of their support. Hopefully, we will receive their support in the upcoming by-election. I am disappointed that this state Labor member is now going to cost Queensland taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars on an unnecessary by-election. It would not have been necessary if he had simply done his job.

I also highlight the ongoing neglect of principal road systems such as the Nielsen's Road interchange. Because of this state Labor member, as well as his southern colleague, the state Labor member for Mudgeeraba, the Queensland Labor government continues to drag the chain when it comes to the development of the Nielsen's road interchange.