



PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: ELLISTON TO LOCK ROAD
29 May 1997

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): This road is of particular interest to me, as most people would be aware. Our farm was on the Lock to Elliston road which, as I remembered it, it was very rough and bumpy. In 1986 a portion of it was sealed, which gave the local people a taste for what a sealed road was like. They have been waiting ever since—yes, I believe that some thanks must go to the Speaker for getting a few things happening. It has taken this Liberal Government to see the need and to acknowledge the importance of a rural community that is as remote and isolated as the one which I represent and which takes in Elliston and Lock. Elliston has the council—

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

Mrs PENFOLD: They are going to have a hard job— especially now that I am getting the Elliston to Lock road and the Kimba to Cleve road.

Mr Atkinson: You think voters are grateful, don't you? You are going to find out.

Mrs PENFOLD: I know that a lot of people will be grateful: I know that most of my relatives and friends in that district will be very grateful. Many of them are on the council or have been on the council. People have to commute to Elliston to the council chambers to be involved in their local government. It is a major commitment, especially when the road is so poor that often they cannot get through in the wet weather. It is very dangerous; there have been a lot of accidents on that road. The parents who send their children on the school buses will be very grateful because those roads, at both ends, have been incredibly dangerous, especially in the bad weather. Sport is very important to isolated communities like Lock and Elliston—it is an opportunity to socialise and to compare notes—and people will soon be able to travel between Lock and Elliston with at least the major part of the road, the worst part, being sealed. That is something that people in the city take for granted. But when you travel more than 100 kilometres to sporting fixtures, it would be nice to have at least most of the road sealed—and the sooner it is completed, the better.

The Lock to Elliston road is also the most direct link to Adelaide for the people of Elliston and districts, and that is where the tertiary education facilities are mostly to be found for students. If they are not in Adelaide, they may be in Whyalla. So, for tertiary education purposes in either Whyalla or Adelaide, the quickest way to get there is by the Elliston to Lock road. The same applies to access to hospitals and specialists. More is being done—especially under this Liberal Government—to provide specialist treatment at the Port Lincoln Hospital, but most of the specialist work is still done in Adelaide, although some is done in Whyalla. That also means that they can go across to Adelaide and Whyalla more quickly and more comfortably to get their education and health needs met. So, it is with great pleasure that I endorse the PublicWorks Committee's recommendation to continue the sealing of this road. I am hopeful that in today's budget we will hear that an amount has been set aside for the next stage of the completion of this project.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I thank the Minister for all the support we have had for the development of, and extra expenditure provided for, roads on Eyre Peninsula. I also thank the member for Giles for his support. It is a pity that his Government was not the Government to spend a little bit of money on roads. I take issue with the fact that people do not use the roads as much as they might. The number of cars on the roads will double or triple as soon as the roads are worth driving on. Presently they are so rough that most of the people who do not want to risk the lives of their family or risk damaging their cars avoid those roads like the plague whenever they go anywhere. You do not want to start a trip to Adelaide by going across the Lock to Elliston Road and irretrievably damaging your car.

I also take issue with the ghost towns comment. There is no way that the people—including myself—on Eyre Peninsula will allow any towns on the Eyre Peninsula to become ghost towns. The member for Giles cannot have been over there recently. He would have known that, in Elliston and in most of the coastal towns, with the oyster development, the development of fin fish farms, tuna farms and other aquaculture in sea and on land, industry is moving ahead apace. It will only get faster in future. I am sure the coastal towns will not be running into population problems but increasing their population. Already Streaky Bay's population is increasing. Its increase is mostly coming from the tourism industry which, when we spend more money—as the Liberal Government is doing—on the great number of parks we have on Eyre Peninsula, we will get more people into them. I understand that the Lincoln National Park on Eyre Peninsula has increased its visitor numbers by about 85 per cent. In addition, I refer to the minerals and the fact that the Yumberra National Park development is currently being blocked by Labor and Democrat people. There are hundreds of jobs in the Yumberra National Park.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Even though the matters the member for Flinders is raising are particularly near and dear to the Speaker's heart, she is now starting to spread somewhat wider than the motion before the Chair.

Mrs PENFOLD: Yes. However, the member for Giles said that we would have ghost towns and I do not think there will be a ghost town anywhere on the Eyre Peninsula. The Kimba to Cleve road, as with the Lock to Elliston road, will have a lot more traffic, and the towns will grow. For the social and economic well-being, health and education of the people in those areas, it will be a great boost. The Liberal Government has bitten the bullet regarding spending on such major roads left unsealed by a Labor Government and is putting in the money to seal them. I am proud to be part of that Liberal Government.