



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee C

Report

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.44 p.m.): It is a great pleasure to rise in this debate. Firstly, I thank the members of the committee which I chaired. In particular, I thank the member for Gregory, who was the deputy chair, and the other members of the committee: the members for Mount Ommaney, Gladstone, Mooloolah and Mansfield. I also acknowledge the wonderful and very professional contribution of the committee staff: Rob Hansen, research director; Barbara Petrie-Repar, research officer; and Linda Philip, executive assistant. They certainly were of great assistance to the committee. I also thank the members of the committee in general in terms of their collegiate approach to the task and their sense of working cooperatively to produce a sound report.

The first portfolios dealt with by the committee were those of the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. The coverage of the committee's work was quite extensive and comprehensive. There are a few matters that I would like to touch upon in relation to these particular portfolios. For some years, the overall tendency within the departments has been towards privatisation, commercialisation and various other forms of rationalisation of services. The Department of Public Works and the Department of Housing have been shaken up very substantially, and perhaps in an over-enthusiastic manner, by previous Governments in that the employees have been very alienated from the departments and there has been some suffering in terms of service delivery out in the field. I am very pleased that the general tenor that is being displayed by the current Minister is one of obtaining a greater sense of balance in this respect. Indeed, we do have to proceed towards greater efficiency in these departments. As members would know, the entire world has been pushing us towards these ends, but we must retain some balance. This Minister has shown a clear vision and a wish to adhere to some social principles in terms of service delivery and in terms of maintaining an efficient service.

These portfolios are also extremely important in terms of this Government's overall job creation program, the scale of its budget and its sensitivity to the building industry and other industries that are a very substantial foundation for job creation in Queensland. I am very pleased that the Budget indicated that there are substantial increases: a \$46.6m increase, or 18.5%, in Public Works; and an \$11.9m increase in Housing, or 5.5%.

There are other major challenges in these portfolios, particularly Housing, in terms of providing safe and modern premises that are regularly maintained for residents and dealing with issues such as the private management of those facilities. In my electorate, the issue of private management has generally been given the comprehensive thumbs down by the recipients of services in that sphere.

The other portfolios of Transport and Main Roads were comprehensively covered. I know that the Minister has a very strong commitment, which has been manifested in this budget, to rural and regional roads. Indeed, he has a great empathy for that sector in his electorate. The Pacific Motorway will provide great challenges in this portfolio. Indeed, it has a significant impact on my electorate. I look forward to working with the Minister in that particular portfolio. I also welcome the Minister's

undertakings, which he has given to me personally, in terms of the need for residents in those adjacent suburbs in my electorate to maintain access to the South East Freeway. Overall, this Budget provides infrastructure.

Time expired.
