



Speech by

**JEFF SEENEY**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Committee (Cognate Debate)**

**Estimates Committee A**

**Report No. 2**

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (2.35 p.m.): It is interesting to sit in this Chamber and listen to the Premier talk about hypocrisy. Could I suggest that the hypocrisy that has been displayed by this Government in the short space of time that it has occupied that side of the Chamber sets a new standard unseen anywhere else? However, I have only five minutes to comment on the report of the Estimates Committee A.

A perusal of the transcripts from that committee indicates clearly that the Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade was incapable of answering questions about many of the basic issues associated with his portfolio. He could not provide monthly, industry or country export sales projections. He could not name a single manufacturing industry that he planned to establish in Queensland next year. He could not even provide an unemployment target for the next 12 months. That is from a Government that has chanted "jobs, jobs, jobs" as its major priority. We have heard the chant "5% in five years". It is meaningless. Unemployed people cannot afford to wait five years to make a determination about whether or not this Government's strategies are working. If this Government is fair dinkum about unemployment targets, if it sees any value in setting a target, let it be an annual target so that its performance can be measured against it realistically.

Another key area covered by the Minister is his role in coordinating the development of an energy strategy in Queensland. Obviously, energy supply is vital for any realistic State development. The Minister for State Development has stated publicly that he wants to see the reamalgamation of AUSTA, yet the Treasurer indicated to the committee that competition in the retail and generation sectors had resulted in lower electricity costs. That is evidence of conflict and confusion. The Beattie Labor Government is thrashing around in the dark looking for an energy strategy. The Minister for State Development clearly was not across the issue. He clearly does not understand the issue, yet he was coordinating departmental input into the energy strategy. Is it not curious that the energy strategy is not the responsibility of the Minister for Mines and Energy? It is curious, but it is understandable given the performance of the Minister for Mines and Energy.

An important issue identified in the Estimates committee hearing was the Minister for State Development's complete failure to support development in rural towns and cities. The Beattie Labor Government is continuing to ignore the bush, just as Labor Governments have done in the past. It is concentrating exclusively on the south-east corner and the coastline, just as the Goss Labor Government did. For six years the Goss Labor Government ripped services out of the bush, closing rail lines and cutting health services. It is a record that cannot be escaped. Do members recall the Premier's statement that he was going to govern for all of Queensland? Once again, the facts do not support the empty rhetoric.

Since coming to Government, Mr Beattie and his Ministers have attempted to stop many major projects across Queensland. Callide C is one that is very important to me. It should be very important to the member for Fitzroy, because it involves 1,000 construction jobs for Biloela and central Queensland.

There have been two ministerial inquiries to examine the contracts in an attempt to sink that project, in an attempt to stop those 1,000 construction jobs being delivered to the people whom I and the member for Fitzroy represent.

There have also been major delays in many smaller projects, such as water infrastructure projects, which are important to my electorate and to other areas in rural and regional Queensland. A classic example is the extension of Jones Weir at Mundubbera. Before the 13 June election, this project was planned and ready to go. Now it has been put on hold. After a whole series of studies to determine whether or not this weir will proceed, yet another study has been launched into this river system. In the meantime, the economic benefits, the activity and the jobs that will come with it will not be delivered.

Economic development in rural towns is not just about major projects; it is about small business. These towns are dependent upon small family businesses, and there is no recognition of this small-business sector by the Minister for State Development. Within the State Development budget, there is nothing that will help small business owners in rural Queensland. The Minister is ignoring small business in rural Queensland.

**Mr Hayward:** Were you on the council?

**Mr SEENEY:** I was on the council and our council, like so many others——

Time expired.

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