



Speech by

Hon. K. LINGARD

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard 22 October 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee D

Report

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (12.19 p.m.): On 18 September I raised my concern that the ALP might be going to drop the electricity concessions for life support systems for people who might be on oxygen concentrators or kidney dialysis machines. I have received an answer from the Minister for Mines saying that the concessions were in place, yet the Minister for Families who now administers that particular concession was not agreeing to it. I am delighted to see that, during the Estimates, the Minister for Families has agreed that there will be electricity concessions, although they will be means tested. Maybe we have to move away from means testing in the future, but at least those people who, through means testing, will qualify for electricity concessions will get concessions for using their oxygen concentrators and kidney dialysis machines. I certainly thank the Government for agreeing to that particular point.

I was disappointed during the Estimates to see once again the Minister concentrating an attack on the former director-general, Mr Allan Male. This has really become an indecent obsession for the Minister, but still I suppose it results from the fact that Jackie Byrne was sacked originally. However, it still is an indecent obsession and I am disappointed to see that the member for Chermerside participated in that particular attack, especially when he recently gave quite a speech in this Chamber about what he thought about the Christian Brothers and what we should do about them. I think the member for Chermerside would admit that Allan Male is one person who has really worked hard in the Shaftesbury Centre.

Nine thousand to 10,000 FOI forms were accessed through the Department of Families. A criticism was found in those 9,000 to 10,000 forms that were accessed about the Shaftesbury Centre back in the 1970s about a particular audit brought on because of sickness at that particular time. The Minister then took that particular comment and criticised the Shaftesbury Centre and then eventually Shaftesbury Campus. Mr Male does not want me to continue talking about it. I know the details. I do not want this attack to continue because Mr Male has no recourse to Parliament. But it still is an indecent obsession that the Minister has continued with over the past two years.

I am also disappointed to find that \$2.6m was allocated for neighbourhood centres, which are called multipurpose centres. However, at a recent opening of one of those neighbourhood centres, one of the departmental people spoke about the 10 neighbourhood centres or multipurpose centres that this Government was going to build. Back in 1996 there were to be 10 multipurpose or neighbourhood centres. We allocated \$2.6m for five of those centres. Those five were to be Edmonton, Nambour, Whitsunday—which is Cannonvale—Miles and Acacia Ridge.

I went ahead with the construction of those five neighbourhood centres. When I saw another \$2.6m in this budget, I asked, "Where are the next five centres to go?" But now I find that that money is for the original five centres. So in honesty, there are not 10 neighbourhood centres or multipurpose centres; there are only five, which are the original 1996 multipurpose centres. We chose five from the original 10, but now those extra five will not be built. So those communities will miss out on their centres.

I also ask the Minister to make a definite decision about the Beaudesert respite centre, which is to be located at Jimboomba. People wrote on 21 July asking about definite progress on this particular centre. To this date—three months later—the Minister has not advised the Beaudesert people whether this respite centre, which was decided upon in 1997, would go ahead. I know it has been a political game. I know that, unfortunately, the then deputy director-general, Dr Peter Botsman, passed away when he was negotiating all of this and the Challinor Centre. But let me say to the Minister: in negotiating for people to come out of the Challinor Centre and go into the community, there is a need for respite in the Beaudesert area.

Certainly there were discussions with the Beaudesert Shire Council about whether one of those particular centres, which are now being built at Loganlea, could be built at Beaudesert. In the discussions about whether people with disabilities could come into the Beaudesert area, it was discussed that there was a need for respite. So it was agreed to build a respite centre. In fact, in letters from the Minister—me at that time—it was actually agreed that \$400,000 was allocated for that centre. It has now been through Project Services. Tenders have been called. Money has been allocated and money has been used in Project Services. But still the Minister will not say whether she agrees to go ahead with the respite centre. People with disabilities have been transferred to Beaudesert to use that respite centre. The post-school options program has also been placed there.

Time expired.
