



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee C

Report

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (4.49 p.m.): In rising to speak to the debate on the report of Estimates Committee C, I endorse and second the applause that the chairman of the committee, the member for Greenslopes, bestowed on the committee. I thank Rob Hansen, Barbara Petrie-Repar and Linda Phillips. I thank also the other members of Estimates Committee C. In speaking to the report of Estimates Committee C it would be very remiss of me if I did not recognise that the Public Works and Housing Department was also a party to Estimates Committee C. I thank the Minister for Public Works and the Minister for Housing, Rob Schwarten, for his recognition of the need for improving isolated and remote housing. He reflects that a Minister who has lived and worked in isolated and remote areas of Queensland is better able to know and understand the needs of people in those areas. I thank him for his contribution.

The main sector that I will discuss is the Transport and Main Roads portfolio, for which the budget is \$1.158m. I will not elaborate too much except to say that that Budget allocation is virtually a carbon copy of the allocation in the coalition's Budget that was brought down in May. It is great to see that this Government has endorsed the policies of the coalition in carrying out those programs. In his contribution, the Chairman of Estimates Committee C mentioned the \$750m motorway. Approximately 3,000 jobs are being created through that project. Those jobs extend from Hervey Bay in the north to Coffs Harbour in the south where materials have been produced for that motorway project. In this case the benefits flow to Queensland and New South Wales. That is a fantastic project. I hope that the new Government has the vision to carry on the capital works programs that I put in place as Minister.

When considering the Pacific Motorway, we should consider the Transport budget of \$1.217 billion for the Pacific Motorway. That is a significant contribution. As members we talk about the importance of the South East Transit Project and the importance of its interfacing with the Pacific Motorway. I could discuss numerous other matters, but time does not allow. I support totally the programs that have been maintained.

The member for Greenslopes touched on regional and rural roads. It is great to see that the Government is considering those roads and that an extra \$48.79m has been provided for them. The people of rural and regional Queensland certainly applaud that.

I turn now to the tilt train. I touched on this matter during the Estimates committee hearings. I asked the Minister about the tendering process, which has been bypassed. That concerned the Opposition members of Estimates Committee C. That is a project of some \$122m. I believe that it is only proper that not only Walkers of Maryborough but also other companies be able to tender for a contract of that magnitude. If the coalition in Government bypassed the tendering processing, we would be criticised severely. Nobody tries to cut back on jobs. We are certainly not trying to cut back on jobs at Walkers; however, the process has to be handled professionally, properly and in a fair-minded, commercial manner. That has not taken place here. I will be having more to say about that as the project progresses. The people of Queensland should know that that project will not cost \$122m. I have evidence from Queensland Rail that shows that it will cost in excess of \$1 billion. I do not think that that

can be denied. The cost of the upgrade of the northern track from Rockhampton through to Cairns and other associated infrastructure improvements along it will come in well over \$122m.

I applaud the Government on the Integrated Regional Transport Plan for the rest of Queensland. The IRTP for the south-east is working well. It is a living, working document. It is a flexible document that can change from year to year. A plan exists for the rest of Queensland. That is fantastic because it gives us as legislators an opportunity to put in place proper management procedures for planning for roads, rail infrastructure, water pipelines, power lines, etc., without cost to communities in years to come through the loss of personal assets because of poor planning in the years before.

Time expired.
