



Speech by

Hon. R. GIBBS

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Hansard 27 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee D
Report**

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (5.45 p.m.): I am delighted to have a couple of minutes to reflect on a couple of matters in relation to the Estimates committee. Quite frankly, I think the Opposition has a dreadful problem each year when it comes to the Estimates in the paucity of the preparation that its members do. I was far from impressed with the performance of the Opposition this year. In fact, I think it was abysmal compared with last year's performance.

The major thing that gets up Opposition members' noses, the thing that they can never come to grips with is this—and they need to be reminded of it again—when we came into office back in 1989 I can remember distinctly that my budget for Sport and Recreation that year was \$6.6m. I will repeat it: \$6.6m. This year the budget will be \$97.8m, which will be distributed throughout the State equitably. We will not be playing the games that the Opposition in Government played in relation to the lives of kids throughout this State. We are going to be honest with them, up front and make sure that everybody gets a fair distribution of the money.

The reality is that, as I keep saying to the sporting clubs throughout Queensland, quite a number of them were on the verge of bankruptcy when we came into office in 1989—and they know it. When we introduced the poker machines into Queensland, they became the lifeblood for the club organisations in this State, and they have never forgotten that. That is why I am amazed when the member for Toowoomba North asks at the committee level, "How can you be sure that Treasury are giving you the truthful figures?" Can he honestly sit there in Parliament or come to an Estimates committee and suggest for one minute that there is a system that operates within Treasury where they grab X amount of money, that they put it away, that none of us ever know about it, that they are not accountable, that the Auditor-General never picks it up and that all the people in Treasury are part of this massive plot to cheat sporting organisations throughout Queensland out of money? This is the sort of stuff that people who smoke hooch have nightmares about. I think he has a real problem and he needs to have a look at his performance.

The member did ask a couple of questions which I will respond to. He asked about the recreation camps. The reality is that, regardless of who has been in Government, some of the recreation camps in this State are in abysmal condition. Somewhere along the line a Government has to make a decision about whether we keep some of those recreation camps or not. I have asked that a full audit be undertaken of the recreation camps throughout this State. It is all right to sit there and try to score a point, but I am being quite up front with the member here.

The reality is that these days those camps are not used as much as they used to years ago. People do not send kids off to camp like they used to. There are other recreational facilities, other things for them to do during holiday periods. Today, if they do go to recreation camps, they go off to broken down recreation camps which in some cases, according to reports that have been given to me and were given to the member's Government when it was in office, are a safety problem. I have asked for a full audit of those. Let us make a decision based on usage and what needs to be spent on them as to whether the Government should keep them all. Do we keep some? Do we dispose of the lot?

What do we do? Let us sit down and have a rational look at it and see where we go in the best interests of everybody.

I will give the member this undertaking, though: under no circumstances will I ever be a party to, in any shape or form, selling off the camp at Tallebudgera or allowing it to run down further. It is an icon in Queensland. It deserves money being spent on it. It is one of the prime locations for kids and families to be able to go on holiday if they were to be provided with an upgraded and modern sort of recreation camp on that site.

In relation to the Royal Queensland Bowls Association, again the member has got it wrong. The newspaper was wrong and, unfortunately, I think RQBA has got it wrong. That association applied for a total funding of \$133,750. That is what someone applies for; that does not mean that they are going to get it. Its application was assessed and it has received \$107,500, comprising \$80,000 as general funding for administration and management activities and a one-off special initiative funding of \$27,500. The alleged \$50,000 budget loss that they talked about is comprised of, firstly, the \$27,500 shortfall when compared with what they applied for from the 1999 special initiative. In addition, they then asked for an additional \$22,500, which they were not given.

Time expired.
