



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard 28 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee G
Report**

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.38 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the recommendation contained within the Estimates Committee G 1999 report. In doing so, I would like to pay particular attention to the Primary Industries portfolio. I would like to point out that a very fresh breeze is blowing through the countryside of Queensland, across the plains in the west, through the Lockyer Valley and to the far north. It is a fresh breeze that is initiated in the southern suburb of Brisbane called Inala. It is in the form of that very fine Minister for Primary Industries, the member for Inala, Henry Palaszczuk.

Mr Lucas: The farmer's friend.

Mr FENLON: He is indeed the farmer's friend. We have to ask: why is this so? Apart from the obvious wit, physical dexterity and personality of the honourable member, he does bring something very different to that portfolio. We have to examine this very highly protected sector from an historical perspective. It is no coincidence that Queensland has been described historically as the State of agrarian socialism in terms of that very high level of protection. It is unfortunate that in the past too many people from that industry have been in charge of that industry.

Before members opposite get too excited about that comment, they should understand that the sheer principle is what I am attacking here. In modern management it is a damned good idea to throw in somebody who has a very different perspective. That idea could be taken to extremes and the suggestion made that it is not a good idea to put teachers in charge of education or engineers in charge of Main Roads, but the fact that somebody with a very different perspective is now overseeing that Ministry of Primary Industries represents a very refreshing change. It is a change that I believe has been accepted and appreciated very well in the bush.

That change is certainly reflected in this budget, which provides a very new mentality and approach to this portfolio. It is a step away from what really has been historically a farm gate mentality towards a far more creative approach. It is a new direction that I hope will be maintained. I hope that we are in the very initial stages of this change. It is a change away from that farm gate mentality to a new approach which is market driven and technology driven.

I welcome the initiatives contained within this budget, especially in relation to emphasising the importance of biotechnology. I also urge the Minister to continue with the very sound approach he is already taking in terms of marketing, because this is a two-ended process. I think we in Queensland have been very remiss historically in terms of connecting both ends of the process. That is, we have to grow for the market and we have to go out there and find the market. I believe that we have a long way to go in terms of Governments working with industry. There are many good models overseas to follow in terms of industries taking the initiative and going out and finding a presence in the other countries in which markets are to be established. I think we need a new approach. We should get away from a very bureaucratic approach to overseas marketing and strive for an approach which is far more entrepreneurial—one which looks to various new forms of overseas agency and representation in order to market our product.

I think there is a lot more to be done and there are new approaches to be taken in those terms. I will be saying a lot more about this in the future. Tomorrow I will be tabling a report in relation to my overseas trip. There is a lot of insight that I hope to provide in terms of getting the marketing organisations, the industry organisations themselves, to have a presence. Many of our markets are very attracted to direct connection to the producers.

Time expired.
