



Speech by

Mr J. HEGARTY

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee A
Report No. 2

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands—NPA) (2.51 p.m.): When reading the information that was supplied to Estimates Committee A by the Premier and the Hansard account of the hearing, the thing that stood out was the lack of clarity and incompleteness of the MPS figures that were supplied to the committee. That was highlighted again yesterday when the Premier tried to explain the situation with the salary packages of the CEOs of the GOCs that come under the Government's umbrella and are the responsibility of various Ministers. The core of the Estimates committee procedure is for the Government to supply the correct information for scrutiny not only by the Opposition but also by the public of Queensland, for whom it administers the State, so that that information can be properly assessed. For that reason, I was a little disappointed that the information was incomplete.

The payment to Treasury of some \$2.8 billion by departments for reasons that I am a little unclear on is disturbing, particularly when some of those departments have projects for which they could well have provided that funding. That is of immense concern. For example, I understand that the Department of Local Government returned approximately \$17m to Treasury. I am not sure why that money was not attributed to projects for which the department has been pressured to provide additional funding. The Redland Shire Council has continually pressed to have funding allocated to assist in the implementation of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Study. The very department that says that no funding is available for that project has returned surplus funds to Treasury when that money could have been well spent on that project, which is worthy of support.

The issue of the Queensland native title Act and the freeze on mining leases was brought up by the Premier again today in his contribution to this debate. I find it very difficult to rationalise how the Premier could cast aspersions on the coalition for the prudent approach that we took to settling the native title issue. Our approach was to avoid pre-empting or setting any further precedents that claimants could latch onto and that could be used in judicial considerations of future claims under the Federal Native Title Act. We know very well the unfortunate saga of the Queensland native title legislation to date. That legislation is full of holes and requires numerous amendments. Of course, at this stage it is not even clear when it will be introduced into the House. It is a very accurate reflection of his inability to move quickly to resolve a very important issue that is affecting all Queenslanders, particularly those in the rural and mining sectors.

According to the Premier's report on Estimates Committee A, part of the explanation for extra expenditure was that additional pressure was put on the Auditor-General to sort out things such as the failed Expo bid and the International Garden Festival. I assure the House that the people in the horticultural sector are still smarting over the lost opportunity that the International Garden Festival offered to their industry in this State. Of course, in addition to that, a wonderful legacy would have been left for the Roma Street precinct development, that is, an international style and standard garden that would have been left following the International Garden Festival's conclusion. That garden would have been the nucleus for the development of the Roma Street precinct.

In conclusion, I was unimpressed by the increased expenditure in the Education budget of only 3.6%. Compared to the huge increases in the Premier's Department budget, the Education Department

lost a lot of capital works money, which has impacted on my electorate and many other areas throughout the State. The department is now short of funds to complete those projects. I expect that the 3.6% increase would only meet CPI adjustments.

Time expired.
