



Speech by

Mr J. HEGARTY

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Hansard 28 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee F
Report**

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands—NPA) (12.42 p.m.): As a member of Estimates Committee F, I will first take up the point just made by the Honourable Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations in relation to the pork-barrelling of those Labor electorates that benefited from the Community Employment Assistance Program.

Mr Reeves: Didn't you hear what he just said?

Mr HEGARTY: I am pointing out to honourable members that the spending in those electorates far exceeded that in coalition electorates: \$3.3m for the ALP electorates and \$0.5m for the coalition electorates. When one considers the area of the State that the Labor Party represents as a percentage of the total land area and compares that with the total land area that the coalition represents, one realises that the Community Employment Assistance Program represents a disproportionate distribution of equity. The hypocrisy speaks for itself. I will not pursue the matter any further.

The jobs program in Queensland today is not performing to the expectations generated by the rhetoric that the Beattie Government is always touting. I believe that the employment level will be locked at 8% because of the types of measures this Government has introduced. The target that the Premier always talks about might be fine for the media but the reality is that, as a result of budgetary changes, portfolios such as Health, Education and Transport and Main Roads, which were job-generating portfolios, will be diminished by the lack of funding available, particularly for infrastructure under the Transport and Main Roads portfolio.

As to the Education portfolio—I spoke to the Minister about the shortage of capital funding available. I highlighted a high school at Victoria Point in my electorate that was desperately in need of a student facility. The expectation of that building being on line for the new school year in the year 2000 has slipped back owing to budgetary shortfalls. The Minister acknowledged that he would review that situation in light of the information that I provided to him during the Estimates. I am hopeful that he will make good his commitment in that regard.

I turn now to the Microsoft deal in the Education portfolio. That revealed how badly the teaching fraternity in Queensland were sold out, even to the extent that the Teachers Union had to campaign to ensure that the Minister came good with his deal and included them in the consultation process in relation to how the schools were expected to expend their budgets to make the information technology initiatives work within the context of the move to a Smart State.

Mr Reeves: We like having unions involved in the Smart State.

Mr HEGARTY: The member is not even in his correct seat. He sometimes acts as Deputy Speaker and he does not even know the rules of Parliament. He is sitting there interjecting. That is pathetic.

The Beattie stealth tax will impact on most portfolios. Obviously we will see a selling off of assets in Education and TAFE. Of course, that will have a detrimental effect in outlying areas, where job creating initiatives and educational facilities are far more important than the few dollars that will be

returned to the Treasury by this retrograde initiative. I sincerely hope that it will not impact on the unemployment rate, particularly in relation to TAFE, because we are supposed to be gearing up to provide more training places. That will obviously have a diminishing effect on expectations in those areas where facilities may be sold off.

Time expired.
