



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Hansard 27 October 1999

APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee C
Report

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.07 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee C. Although I was a relatively late member of the committee owing to the illness of the member for Mount Ommaney—and all of us on this side wish her well in her recovery—I am extremely interested in the portfolio areas covered by the committee. I must say that, during the hearing, I listened with great interest when the Opposition spokesperson asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads a question about a study in relation to a heavy vehicles route from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road. He gave the impression that he did not support the actions of the Minister in this matter. The member for Gregory questioned the benefits of this study if it meant that more trucks would be using a City/Valley bypass. Unfortunately, the member for Gregory was missing the point. The bypass is just that: a bypass to avoid the city and the valley areas. I believe that, if that means that heavy vehicles use the bypass instead of suburban roads, such as Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road, that is a great initiative. I was interested to hear the Minister once again place on record the significant initiatives that have been made in recent times in relation to Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road. These include the origin and destination survey and, more importantly, the removing of the dangerous goods route from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Kessels Road.

Mr Lucas: He has always said that you give an excellent representation in that area.

Mr REEVES: I actually heard him say that at the time. I thank the Minister for those comments. The member for Mount Gravatt, the member for Archerfield and the member for Sunnybank thank him for those comments as well.

A key initiative of the Transport Department for 1999-2000 that will have a major bearing on my electorate is the progress on the construction of major public transport infrastructure, including the provision of \$212m to continue the construction of the south-east busways. I must stress once again for the public record that our area of the south side has never had a reliable public transport system. When the busways project comes to fruition, it will revolutionise public transport usage in my electorate.

The other department covered by the Estimates hearing was that of Public Works and Housing. Despite the attempts of the member for Mooloolah to push his ideological agenda, it became apparent that the department is performing well and the future initiatives for 1999-2000 are very encouraging. Some of the key elements include the provision of \$55.6m for public housing upgrades and \$97m for public housing building programs.

I also refer to the statement of reservations by the member for Gregory and the member for Mooloolah. To actually be concerned that the Government did not support the coalition's reforms of public housing is a farce. Who would want to support the coalition's reforms of public housing? I challenge those two members to speak to the people in my electorate and many other south-side electorates who had to put up with the Chesterton experience. They will outline quite clearly what they think of the coalition's reforms in public housing. When one considers that the suburb of Mansfield has about 10% public housing, I think that the former member for Mansfield received the answer on how the people felt about this reform: he lost the last election.

It should not surprise us that such an opinion comes from the member for Mooloolah. After all, he is a member of the Liberal Party, which is continually knocking public housing. When they knock public housing, they knock the public housing tenants. In the past few months we have seen the spectacle of the Liberal Leader, the member for Moggill, describing a planned public housing development at Paddington as a potential ghetto. A Liberal councillor from that area told a public meeting that when public housing moves into the area, crime goes up and property values go down. How disgraceful is that? That is an example of the snobbish, look-down-your-nose approach of the Liberals.

Let us consider one of the many positive aspects of public housing, which is the very low level of rental arrears. Public housing rental arrears statistics improved markedly following the introduction of RTA legislation in 1995. For the past two years, the percentage of accounts in arrears by four weeks or more has been consistently well below the target level of 5%. The highest level of arrears was recorded from December to February each year. That is understandable because of all the added financial pressures on families at Christmas and new year and in the lead-up to the beginning of the school year. By the end of July this year, 1.8% of public housing rental accounts will be in arrears by four or more weeks. That compares more than favourably with the private rental market. Why don't the member for Mooloolah and his fellow Liberal snobs ever tell that story? I commend the report to the Committee.
