



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING

MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

Hansard 9 November 2000

APPROPRIATION BILL [No. 2]; APPROPRIATION [PARLIAMENT] BILL [No. 2]

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (3.22 p.m.): In speaking to these Bills, I will be running over some of the aspects that have been brought to my attention. I will not try to run through the whole smorgasbord of departments and waste the time of the House.

For a place like the Sunshine Coast, of course, I will be speaking mainly about infrastructure expenditure rather than recurrent expenditure, because in a place that is growing as quickly as the Sunshine Coast it is very important to have infrastructure in place for all the things that are needed there. Usually recurrent expenditure—hopefully—follows the provision of infrastructure to provide services.

Infrastructure is important. I am sure it is the same in other growth areas. I cannot speak for them, but I am sure areas like Cairns and the Gold Coast also have growing pains and are always playing catch-up football and saying, "We have this growth rate and we don't have this and we don't have that." I do not know whether any Government at any level in any State has really been able to anticipate growth rates in some of these places and actually have the infrastructure in place to accommodate the growth.

One of the most difficult things is not just putting the infrastructure in place, but anticipating where it can be put without causing problems. That is why it is very important to plan ahead. I will speak a little later on such things as the proposed railway to the Sunshine Coast. It is critically important to decide whether that is going to happen, what sort of infrastructure that will be and where it will be, because the earlier it is planned for the fewer people are disadvantaged. If the decision is put off, the opposite happens. One could say the same thing with the straightening of the north coast rail line to north Queensland and putting in the extra line. The decisions that have to be made are whether to have an extra line and whether to follow the existing track or straighten it out at the same time. I have seen aerial photographs of the route; some of the decisions that people in this place are going to have to make in the near future are somewhat frightening. There will be huge ramifications of straightening out the north coast line, because it runs through some very nice agricultural land—pineapple farms and that sort of thing. That is going to be a decision that Governments will have to face. That is just an example of why we have to foresee to the best of our ability what is going to be needed in the future and plan for it so that people know it is coming and can make their lifestyle choices and so that councils can plan around that.

One of the issues that I have promoted and followed in this place and elsewhere is policing. I will not go into a lot of detail on the debate on police numbers in the north coast region. I have gone through that on a number of occasions and I will not do so again. One of the reasons this aspect keeps being brought up is that we have a particular problem at the moment commonly known as hoon and hoon drivers. It seems to be one of the prices that people pay for living in places that people like to come to visit. We have a lot of people coming to the Sunshine Coast. I am not saying there are no locals amongst the hoons; that would be incorrect, but a lot of people come from other places to places like the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast for the weekend and they actually terrorise the neighbourhood, whether they be local residents or people there on holidays, by the way in which they drive their vehicles, which is both unsafe for other people on the roads and themselves and, of course, very disturbing. It is amazing how many people can be woken up at 2 o'clock in the morning by noise

from two or three vehicles within two or three kilometres of where they are trying to get to sleep. So it is quite a serious issue.

I have had a number of discussions with police officers about how to address this and with Queensland Transport people about addressing the problems of these vehicles, the noise they emit and their roadworthiness. I am confident that we can get on top of that problem. I see problems like this as challenges.

As the Sunshine Coast area is one of the busiest maritime areas in Queensland, particularly for recreational fishing, there is a requirement for water police. We have a couple of very good officers at Mooloolaba. Although I say "at Mooloolaba," unfortunately they are not there any more. They have recently shifted away from the water down to Kawana, which is most unfortunate. The temporary office they were in was quite cramped and not suitable for their purposes, but at least it was near the water where their activities are. And it was where they could talk with people and observe what was going on in and around the harbour, where they could talk to the boating and fisheries people and Queensland Transport Maritime Division people about areas of common concern and interest. Now that they have moved down to Kawana Police Station, they are away from the culture of the waterside.

This needs to be addressed. I have brought it up in the House before and I have spoken to people about it. I believe the Sunshine Coast deserves to have the same sort of facility that we find at the Gold Coast and Cairns—and I have visited both of those places—where the Maritime Division of Queensland Transport, the DPI Fisheries and the water police are in the same building. A lot of people do not know which department they need to talk to, but somebody who goes to the one in Cairns can be redirected elsewhere in the building to have concerns addressed. That is something that is going to require the cooperation of the Police Department, Queensland Transport and DPI Fisheries. What often happens is that one department may see it as an urgent thing, whereas one or other of the other departments do not have it at the top of their priority list and therefore it does not happen.

I would like to make a multiple request of the three relevant Ministers that this be looked at with the idea of some cooperation. The land is there at the spit at Mooloolaba. There are already existing buildings being used by non-maritime users. What would be most suitable is a building with space for the three services and the boats. The Department of Environment should also be included, because although its officers do not currently have the facility they do have the need to get on the water from time to time. The departments could then work very closely together. That is a very important issue for the future.

In relation to policing, it is now time for a police station in or around Buderim. I talked to senior police officers years ago and they identified Beerwah as having a higher priority. In the spirit of looking at things from a regional perspective, I said, "That's fine. Let's go for the Beerwah one." We do have a police station at Beerwah now and it is now time, I believe, for one at Buderim. It should be next in line for a police station because of the huge growth rate not only in Buderim but also in the Chancellor Park area. It is also very close to the Bruce Highway, which would be advantageous considering that police conduct various activities on the Bruce Highway. That is a very important consideration.

I said earlier that we have a fine police station at Kawana. I am very pleased to have been involved in the Police for Kawana Waters Committee before I came into this place. I remember making representations to the then Minister, Mr Mackenroth. We did get that police station. It is a very nice police station, but unfortunately it is open only in daylight hours. As that station is situated right on the Nicklin Way where a lot of people travel—both locals and visitors to the coast—a lot of people have need to call in to a visible, large and modern police station only to find that it is open only during office hours. Senior Sergeant Paul Sarquis did a trial some time ago opening until about 11 o'clock at night. It was clear from that trial that it was appreciated and used by not only locals but also visitors to the area.

I turn now to emergency services. Recently, in the House we had a debate in relation to the Kawana Fire Station. I believe that, once again, we have a very good station there. It is manned by the auxiliaries, who do an excellent job. There is no doubt about that. However, I believe that fire services for the Kawana and surrounding areas would be enhanced if we had a supplement of full-time officers there to do some of the things that full-time officers can do best. I would like to once again request that that be given serious consideration. In relation to ambulance services, we have fine ambulance stations both at Buderim and Kawana and great staff who do a great job. In the time I have been in this job I have not had any complaints about ambulance services in and around my electorate, and that is great. I would like to compliment them on that.

The new station that has opened at Maroochydore on the Sunshine Motorway is a joint facility for fire and ambulance. I have had the opportunity to visit it only once, but I understand there are some activities on Saturday, and I hope to call in and see that great station again. The location of this state-of-the-art station should enhance both fire and ambulance services to the central Sunshine Coast area.

Education is obviously one of the important issues on the Sunshine Coast. I compliment all recent Governments of both political persuasions because I think the provision of schools on the

Sunshine Coast has been excellent. We have some wonderful schools. I think four or five have been opened in my electorate since I have been in this job. That is possibly something of a record. They include the Mountain Creek State School, the Mountain Creek State High School, the Chancellor Primary School and the university. I believe there are another couple in the pipeline, including a primary school at Glenfields and also a high school out near the university.

They do a wonderful job. The Mountain Creek State High School competes quite openly with the very good private schools that we have in the area. As I understand it, the Kawana Waters State High School has the highest proportion of overseas fee-paying students of any school in Queensland. They are very proud of that record. They have a lot of students from China. This adds quite a dimension to the schooling activities at that school. They are very pleased with that. We need to make sure that the provision of education continues. It is very important to get the schools, as I mentioned, out at Chancellor Park and the high school and the primary school at Glenfields moving along.

Talking of moving along, I should talk about roadworks. If I had to select one section of infrastructure that is most important on the Sunshine Coast, I would have to say roadworks, because it affects almost everybody every day. We do have a good main road through the Sunshine Coast—the Sunshine Motorway. That is now so busy that the two lane sections of it on the central coast need to be upgraded urgently. Once again, I would strongly suggest to the Minister for Transport that the four laning between Buderim-Mooloolaba Road and Maroochydore Road and the section of the motorway from Mooloolaba out to the Bruce Highway be brought forward. That is desperately in need of work, as is the intersection of the Sunshine Motorway with Buderim-Mooloolaba Road. It is a very awkward interchange and the traffic flows very slowly. A lot of people are held up in traffic at that interchange. Although it will be a fairly complex task and not inexpensive, it is something that really has to be done.

The intersection of the Sunshine Motorway and the Bruce Highway is another one that causes concern. People travelling north to Nambour departing the highway have to cross traffic intending to travel north on the highway. I would suggest without much fear of contradiction that that is the most dangerous intersection on the Sunshine Coast. There have been fatalities at that intersection. I would ask that, when the intersection is being designed, it be done in such a way so that that part of the intersection can be completed first without compromising the overall planning.

I have mentioned the Kawana arterial in this place before. It is the new proposed road which is west of the Nicklin Way, joining Caloundra Road with Mooloolaba. It is planned to be on the multimodal corridor. The land is there. When the Briztram project was dropped, I had no hesitation in suggesting in this place and to the Federal Parliament that that money be put towards constructing that road, and it could be called the "Federation Way". I believe it would be one of the best alternatives for using those funds. It would certainly go a long way towards easing the problems of the Nicklin Way, which has almost got to the stage where it cannot be redeveloped any further. I think it is carrying almost 40,000 vehicles a day. That really needs to be addressed. It is now six lanes at the northern end and it cannot be redeveloped any further. So that needs to be brought forward.

Rail to the Sunshine Coast is a very big issue. I have talked about the necessity for planning early for such things. We now have the corridor notionally in place. I think we should be very seriously thinking about exactly what mode of transport we should be using there and keep that firmly on the planning agenda.

In the area of sport, we now have a synthetic track at the Sunshine Coast University, which saw a lot of international teams training before the Olympic Games. We also have nearing completion a synthetic hockey track at Ballinger Park. I am pleased to have had some involvement in both of these projects. To make that hockey track really fire, a clubhouse is needed where people can come and go, get changed and showered, and all those sorts of things. I will be looking forward to making a submission for some funding to finish off that job. We can produce Olympic standard hockey players on the Sunshine Coast, but at the moment they have to go elsewhere to train and to play on synthetic fields. We are very keen to get that happening on the Sunshine Coast.

A new Olympic-sized pool is needed near the university. I understand that the university is keen to have the pool on its property. It would service three adjacent schools—the Siena Catholic College, the proposed State high school and the existing primary school, as well as the Chancellor Park community. That is a very important project. I will be talking with the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing and the Minister in relation to that.

There is also the issue of skate bowls. A few years ago people would not know what a skate bowl was. They are popping up everywhere. They seem to serve a very real purpose in the community with young people. They love them. However, there are some problems attached to them if they are not run properly. That needs to be dealt with. Putting them near a pool with management to look after them to ensure that children do not come to any harm is better than plonking them in a paddock somewhere and hoping the kids look after themselves. We know that kids cannot look after themselves, particularly when there are people who tend to prey on them.

I will not get through all the infrastructure I wanted to mention today. It is obvious that the Sunshine Coast needs a lot, because I cannot get through the list of things it needs in 20 minutes. I noticed in the Sunshine Coast Daily this week that consideration is being given to closing the detox unit at Nambour Hospital. That issue needs to be looked at, because there is a significant problem with people requiring that service as a result of alcohol or drug abuse. Whatever happens in that regard, I hope the need for that unit is considered before there is any cost cutting. It provides a very good service in the area. The Mooloolah River National Park requires fencing and a management plan. That issue needs to be on the list as well.
