



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 9 November 2000

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

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (10.17 p.m.), in reply: In concluding debate on the Appropriation Bills this evening, I want to thank honourable members for their wide-ranging—

Mr Hegarty: Madam Deputy Speaker—

Mr HAMILL: Sir, pardon me, but I had the call.

Mr HEGARTY: I rise to a point of order. We have the speaking list here. It is well documented.

Mr HAMILL: And the member for Redlands is not on it.

Mr HEGARTY: I am sorry, I am. If you look at the list, Madam Deputy Speaker—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Nelson-Carr): Order! Member for Redlands, I did not see you stand up, and so the Treasurer has—

Mr HEGARTY: Madam Deputy Speaker, we have given you the list. You are digressing from protocol. If the Minister is not informed of the progression of the speaking list, that is his problem. But I was here ready to jump.

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I was given the call and I am concluding the second-reading debate.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could I just say that the member for Redlands did not stand up. I call the Treasurer.

Mr HAMILL: After quite a wide-ranging debate, which has now extended over some 12 or 13 hours—

Mr HEGARTY: I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that you did not call the Treasurer—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry, but I did call the Treasurer, and that is not a point of order. I call the Treasurer.

Mr HAMILL: As I was saying, the debate on the Appropriation Bills has been an interesting one and it has been very wide ranging. After listening intently to the offerings of honourable members, I am at a loss to find anyone who really addressed the point that the Appropriation Bills that are before the House actually relate to unforeseen expenditure from the last financial year. So much of the debate seemed to be prospective rather than retrospective. Nevertheless, I will make just a couple of brief points.

Last year Queensland recorded very strong growth of 4.9%—far in excess of our Budget forecast, and comparing that to 4.2% for the rest of Australia we find that Queensland performed quite admirably. It is noteworthy, however, that we are expecting that this year growth will ease somewhat. I note the comments made by the member for Moggill in relation to the QCCI Pulse survey. However, I draw his attention to the full findings of that particular survey. For the September quarter 2000 the QCCI stated that 49% of respondents experienced deterioration in their general business conditions, compared to 29% who reported improved activity.

According to the QCCI, major contributing factors in the significant deterioration include administration for the introduction of the GST, higher interest rates, uncertainty over further rate hikes

and increased fuel prices. All of those matters are outside of the capacity of the Queensland Government to respond. All of those issues relate to national economic policies and the deliberate policies of the Commonwealth Government which have resulted in a considerable burden being placed upon industry—and particularly the road transport industry—through the Commonwealth's greed in the extraction of increasing levels of excise on already inflated fuel prices.

This is a matter of concern to the Queensland Government. Notwithstanding these extraneous impacts, we certainly are not deviating from our prime purpose, and that is to generate employment and job opportunities in Queensland. I note that at a time when the overall labour force data indicates some deterioration in the labour market nationally, the trend unemployment rate in Queensland has remained steady on the figures which were released earlier today.

Nevertheless, the general slowing of the economy nationally is impacting upon the regional economy of Queensland, and that is a matter of concern. That is why our record capital works program this year of some \$5.3 billion is of great significance, particularly when one considers the dreadful impact that the GST and rising interest rates have had upon activity in the housing and construction sector, which has long been recognised as a barometer for the general health of the economy.

I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. Let me assure honourable members that the Queensland Government will not take its eye off the ball. We are determined to continue to provide the fiscal framework which ensures that Queensland will have a leading role as the economic and job generating powerhouse in Australia. I commend the Bills to the House.
