



Speech by

Mr P. PURCELL

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

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APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.02 p.m.): I wish to speak to the Appropriation Bill for the proposed expenditures of the Premier and Minister for Trade; the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport; and the Minister for State Development. Before I go into detail, I thank the ministers, ministerial officers, their departments, independent agencies and GOCs for their appearance and the manner in which they answered the questions that were put to them by the committee.

Also, I thank the committee members for their hard work, diligence and commitment to the job at hand: firstly, the Deputy Chairman, Mike Horan, the member for Toowoomba; his deputy, Vaughan Johnson, the member for Gregory; Mrs Elizabeth Cunningham, the member for Gladstone; Mr Michael Choi, the member for Capalaba; Ms Margaret Keech, the member for Albert; and Mr Kerry Shine, the member for Toowoomba North. The process worked very well. Everybody who took part in this process learnt something and we will continue to learn from estimates—that goes for everybody from the Premier down. We all learn from the process and the parliament is enriched by the information that we gather from looking at budgets and asking departments questions about the expenditure of this place.

There is one person whom I would like to mention as I neglected to thank her on the day. I will do that now on behalf of the committee. I give many thanks to Leanne Clare, our research director. Leanne did her job efficiently, thoroughly and with a minimum of fuss. I also thank her personally for the help that she gave me and for the long hours she put in to ensure that deadlines were met and that all committee members were kept well informed of what was happening with the committee. Thank you very much to Leanne.

I turn now to some of the information gained by the committee at the hearing. This is a good news budget for all ministers. In his opening address, the Premier mentioned the good news about Queensland's credit rating. If this budget were not a good budget, the hard reality is that the market would soon mark us down. This government is AAA rated. We tend to forget that we are the only state in the Commonwealth and, possibly, in the world that is net debt free. The money that is invested for public servants and people who work for the government is there. Theoretically, if the wheels stopped turning tomorrow, we could pay all our debts. We could pay everybody everything that they were owed. Of course, that will not happen, but it is a good position to be in. That is the good news of the budget. We have an expanded budget for 2001-02 that continues to build on the very honest work that was done by the previous Beattie Labor government.

I turn to the part of the Centrelink report that relates to unemployment. That is a little bit out of context for the simple reason that the budget states that we will maintain an unemployment rate of eight per cent for the next 12 months. This state continues to grow its employment rate by about 20 per cent. That is faster than any other state in the Commonwealth. Internal migration continues into Queensland. Everybody wants to live in Queensland. People come here because of the jobs. We have the highest participation rate per head of population of any state in the Commonwealth. We say, 'If you want a job, come to Queensland and we will endeavour to give you a job.' People will continue to come here in their thousands.

I remember when the Commonwealth Games were held in Brisbane and the excitement and wellbeing that was felt throughout Brisbane, Queensland and even Australia. The Goodwill Games are coming here and I do not think that that has really hit home yet with Queenslanders. It is estimated that

\$340-odd million will be pumped into the economy through those games. Hundreds of millions of people throughout the world will get to look at our state and Brisbane. That is a good news story that is not being told. I urge members on both sides of the House to advertise that as best they can. I support the report before the committee.
