



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 27 August 1998

LITERACY AND NUMERACY REPORT

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (2.23 a.m.): During yesterday's sitting, after I tabled a report on literacy that had been suppressed by the former Education Minister, I said that the report should have set alarm bells ringing for the former Minister. The member for Merrimac then told the House that it had. He said—

"In the six years of Labor, an average of \$6m was provided for literacy and numeracy. The coalition provided an average of \$30m per year ... it did set alarm bells ringing and we did something about it."

His words were the direct opposite of the truth. The massive increase in funds for literacy was actually an initiative of his predecessor, the member for Ipswich. I table the relevant section of the 1995 resource agreement between Treasury and Education Queensland showing \$34.2m additional expenditure on literacy. I also table a requested ministerial briefing for information dated 12 December 1997. It states—

"State funding in real terms (literacy and numeracy initiative plus reading recovery initiative) has decreased from 1996/97 to 1997/98. This is a result of the change in structure to Education Queensland."

So, far from increasing funds for literacy, the member for Merrimac decreased them and then suppressed the report that revealed the enormity of what he was doing.

Members should consider the contortions the already gaunt member has undertaken on this issue. First he deceived the people of Queensland by hiding a critical report. Then he told the Courier-Mail that he could not remember the report. Then he told the Parliament that the report had set alarm bells ringing and that in response he had increased funding for literacy when in fact the increase that he referred to was a Labor initiative and his only initiative, as indicated to him in his own requested ministerial briefing note, was to reduce funding for literacy.

The member for Merrimac has been a very naughty boy. He has been telling fibs to Parliament. I think that he should be punished. I suggest that he should have to write out 100 lines and I suggest that the line be, "I must not hide people's reports."

Time expired.
