



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee F

Report

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (3.42 p.m.): I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments about this Estimates committee report. At the outset, I commend the Minister for Education on the implementation of the Cooler Schools program. It is a program that has particular importance for a large section of my electorate. I feel sure that a great number of schools will also benefit from it. I just hope that the Minister for Education has allocated enough funds in his budget allocations to cater for the uptake that will inevitably come for that program.

Mr Hamill: A lot more than there was in May.

Mr SEENEY: It is a great program. I give credit where credit is due. In the short time that I have been in this Chamber, I have not had cause to congratulate too many of the Ministers sitting opposite, but in all sincerity I commend the Minister for Education on the Cooler Schools program and the way in which it has been implemented according to the election promises. I think that the four to one subsidy rate is a great result. I just hope that those schools will see that scheme come to fruition, and I say that most sincerely.

I would now like to revert to form and make some comments about the Training part of the Estimates committee. I have listened to the rhetoric from the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations. Unfortunately, I cannot see that that rhetoric is backed by fact. It is worth repeating some of the figures that I quoted for the building industry during a debate in this Chamber yesterday. In 1992-93, the number of apprentices and trainees in the building industry who completed their training was 1,246. Two years later, under a Labor Government, that figure dropped to 874. That was a reduction of 362 apprentices and trainees—and the member for Bulimba should listen to this because I know that he has an interest in the business. There were 362 apprentices who never completed their training in that one industry. That was the pattern across the gamut of industries while Labor was in power.

Sooner or later, this Government must be judged on more than rhetoric. Sooner or later, the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations must make it happen. There are too many talkers on the Government side of the Chamber and not enough doers. Too many talkers are concentrating on the rhetoric and tomorrow's press release rather than getting results in the field. Sooner or later, they have to be judged on the results on the ground, and it is those results that count. The success or otherwise of this Budget and the initiatives that it contains will not be measured in terms of dollars spent, or speeches made, or press releases issued; it will be measured in terms of people trained and tradesmen produced.

During the comments of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations on this Estimates committee report, he criticised the performance of the coalition Government. It is worth repeating some of the things that the coalition Government did. Under the coalition Government, part-time arrangements were built into apprenticeships and traineeships so that the number of businesses that could for the first time consider employing an apprentice or a trainee in their own right was widened significantly, and many, many businesses took up that opportunity.

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr SEENEY: If the member is going to interject, she should do it loudly enough so that I can reply. I enjoy responding to interjections, but I cannot respond when I cannot hear them.

The coalition introduced school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, which allowed young Queenslanders to gain relevant and useful industry experience as well as vocational qualifications whilst still attending school. The coalition introduced work-based delivery of training, significantly reducing and in many cases eliminating the need for apprentices and trainees to leave their workplaces to receive formal education. The coalition upgraded efforts to ensure the application of competency-based training across the full vocational training spectrum. All of those policies were designed to achieve positive results, they were achieving positive results, and they would have continued to do so.

All we have heard from this Government is a repeat of the same old rhetoric. However, we must all ensure that that rhetoric produces results. Of the apprentices who start their indentures, 55% fail, and that is an unacceptable result for all of us.

Time expired.
