



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee A

Report No. 1

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (11.31 a.m.): I will address a number of aspects of the Legislative Assembly report. First, I commend the work being undertaken by Graeme Kinnear and Wendy Skelcey in Education Services. I think they have performed outstanding work in improving the understanding of visitors to Parliament House. It is not just for primary school students; it is just as important for university and TAFE students.

If I may offer a constructive criticism of the high school curriculum, it is that Australian history, particularly the Australian political system, does not seem to loom large. It appears to me from my time as a part-time university lecturer and tutor that after Year 7 students only became acquainted with the Australian political system at TAFE or at university. This is where Graeme and particularly Wendy fill the void.

I also commend the work carried out by the secretariats to the various committees of this Parliament. For Estimates Committee A, I particularly commend Leanne Nielsen, Kerryn Newton and Meg Hoban for the work they did. Kerryn came back from her honeymoon to ensure the smooth running of the Committee. I think this dedication should be recognised by all members of this Chamber. I also commend Neil Laurie, Meg and Sandy Musch for the work they carry out in advising members of the Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. Their advice is always timely and their entire approach is very professional. That should not go unrecognised in this place.

I also pay tribute to the staff in the Parliamentary Library. The increased use of technology in the library assisted me in my previous role as an adviser in this place. Technology is also of enormous assistance to me as a member of this Chamber. I believe that a properly resourced library is a vital contributor to the proper functioning of this place. The Opposition simply does not have the resources that Government has available to it. Library resources are absolutely essential to the Opposition effectively carrying out its vital role.

I particularly now look at electorate offices and the staffing and resources given to them. I know that there have been difficulties with email and I know that the Speaker is making every attempt to overcome these problems. Each newly elected batch of MPs will inevitably be more computer literate than the ones who preceded them. Accordingly, I ask for a second computer—not necessarily a new one—to be installed either in the electorate office or in the Parliament House office.

I know that the Parliament gives more resources to members from far-flung electorates—and I have no problems with that—however, I believe consideration should be given to members representing rapidly growing electorates. By the time of the next redistribution, electorates such as Kallangur, Albert, Noosa, Nerang, Ferny Grove, Logan and Sunnybank will have twice the number of electors as the electorate of Warrego, yet no extra financial assistance is provided. I believe the current allowance to MLAs to engage extra staff should have a weighting attached to it for population above the State average, particularly in the lead-up to the next redistribution. If members are well above it, they get the 10.5; if they are well below it, it could be weighted. That way there is no extra financial burden being borne by the Parliament. My colleague the member for Mackay also says that he is the only member located in the City of Mackay. He represents the entire population of Mackay. I

understand that the member for Mirani is based in Sarina. I ask for an examination of that \$10,000 allowance.

Finally, I wish to touch on the issue of entitlements for non-Government members. I find it the height of hypocrisy that the leader of One Nation—One Nation members moaned and whinged about their staffing—could not rouse himself from that stupor he is in to even request an appearance at the Committee so that he could ask a couple of questions. He has been in the media moaning and whingeing about his resources. If One Nation wants the entitlements, it should not shirk the responsibility. All One Nation members do is shirk their parliamentary responsibilities. Their leader did not show up; he did not do anything. I commend the report to the House.

Time expired.
