



Speech by

**Mr L. SPRINGBORG**

**MEMBER FOR WARWICK**

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Hansard 21 October 1998

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Committee (Cognate Debate)**

**Estimates Committee A**

**Report No. 1**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Warwick—NPA) (11.58 a.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I participate in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee A. I commend all members of this Parliament who, I believe, have come in here with very strong principles and a very strong desire to do the right thing by their constituents and by this Parliament. It is a little unfortunate that, from time to time, it is the philosophical or ideological issues that tend to divide us in here and in the electorate. The member for Chermside often discusses the way the media covers the proceedings of the House. I believe he raises some very good points. A lot of people come up to me and ask, "Why do you people not agree with the Government or why does the Government not agree with you?" I tell them that we do agree on 70% to 75% of the pieces of legislation and issues that are discussed in this Parliament. However, we have an adversarial system. The portraying of a different image by those who report this place strikes at the heart of the image that they have been trying to build of this place over a long period. So I try to talk to people about the level of common ground that we reach in this Chamber. I commend all members who work very hard in the interests of their constituencies.

I would also like to commend the Speaker on the establishment of his technology advisory group. I have been nominated as the Opposition member on that group. I am looking forward very much to participating in providing any advice and information that I can to further what the Speaker wants to do and also to make sure that members of this Parliament have the resources and the latest in technology that they require to do their jobs. From time to time I believe that we feel a little bit of frustration—as do public servants and as do people who do other work—with information overload. Today, work seems to be a lot more stressful and people are working a lot harder. Over the past 10 years to 15 years our capacity to respond to that work has increased exponentially. However, our ability to get ahead has not improved because everybody else's ability to respond has gone up at the same rate. Basically, we are level pegging all the way. I am not saying that we will ever be able to stop that. However, over the past few years our ability to generate reports and responses has not matched our constituents' ability to organise good letter-writing campaigns and to be more proactive in the way in which they approach members of Parliament. That is why I think it is very important that we keep pace with technology.

I am sure that the Treasurer and other members of the Executive arm of Government sitting opposite will appreciate my next comment, which is that when I became a Minister I was amazed at how outdated, how antiquated, the equipment was in the Ministers' offices. The departments had Word 97 package and all sorts of networking technology——

**Mr Hamill:** What's new?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I wanted a copy of Word 97 for database purposes. The reply from MSB was, "We do not believe that you need that in a ministerial office because you only do word processing." The Ministers are supposed to be willing and able to respond. We should at least have some sort of formal coordination between our departments and the Ministers' offices, particularly in

relation to issues of security. From a word processing point of view, our equipment is okay. However, if we want spreadsheets or the latest in networking technology, the equipment is inadequate. This is not the fault of the Speaker; we tend to upgrade the equipment in the other arms of Government but we do not consider what technology we require. I think that we need to be far more aware of that.

A very good point was made in relation to mobile phones. I will have a problem because I use an analogue mobile phone. Although it provides better coverage for most regional members of Parliament, the analogue network is being phased out at the end of next year. So we need to give consideration to that.

I would like to commend the staff who work very hard in this place. The catering staff do a great job, as do the IT staff, security and the Hansard staff, who make some of the speeches in this place that are not delivered very well read like the Gettysburg Address in Hansard the next day.

**An honourable member:** Translated into English.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Yes, translated into English. Our corporate services staff, our committee staff and our gardeners all do an excellent job. I encourage the Executive arm of Government to continue to appreciate this place, to appreciate the independence of this place, and to make sure that it is properly and adequately resourced.

Time expired.

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