



Speech by

Hon. MERRI ROSE

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee B

Report

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (4.34 p.m.): I am delighted to be able to participate in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee B. I was pleased to have the opportunity to be part of the Estimates committee process and I congratulate the chairman and committee members on the way they conducted the process. I also acknowledge the hard work of so many officers in the Department of Emergency Services.

The report of Estimates Committee B is actually a very good one. It talks about the free ambulance service for pensioners from 1 January, enhanced funding for the Rural Fire Service, new vehicles for rural fire services, the new hot fire training facility for the QFRA, an extensive capital works program and a record budget for the Department of Emergency Services.

Then we turn the page and what do we find? We find a dissenting report signed by the shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, who, I must admit, was present for the entirety of the committee hearings; the shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services, who did not ask one question but took off after about half an hour; and the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, who I acknowledge is away this week. They must have delegated the task to the member for Redlands, who knew absolutely nothing about the hearings of Estimates Committee B into the Department of Emergency Services. He obviously has not read Hansard.

When I first saw this report I thought, "What possible motivation could those three members have had for signing this dissenting report?" The only conclusion I can come to is that they are trying to provoke me into again revealing in this Chamber the incompetence of the former Minister for Emergency Services and member for Southport. They just want to hear me keep talking about the shocking state of the QFRA fund when we took Government.

I have never said that the fund was in the red for this financial year. I have continually talked about the financial future of the QFRA fund. As I said at the Estimates committee hearing, I really do not think the previous Minister had any idea. Actually, I do not think he was able to even comprehend what budget figures were all about. All he could see was that there was enough money in the budget for the current financial year. He had absolutely no idea about the next year or any of the out years. He had absolutely no idea.

Either he could not comprehend what was happening with the QFRA fund or he was aware of it and he sat on his hands and did absolutely nothing about it. He commissioned the Masters report. Those opposite talk about me not releasing the PricewaterhouseCoopers report.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the Committee by saying that the former Minister did absolutely nothing about it. I ask that she retract that statement.

Mrs ROSE: I withdraw. Everybody has been saying that I will not release the report. It is at my discretion to release that report when I believe it is appropriate to do so. The previous Minister commissioned the Masters report, and what did it say? The Masters report also indicated the parlous future of the QFRA fund. The PricewaterhouseCoopers report has stated that the QFRA fund is spiralling downwards towards insolvency—unless we do something about it. I will do something about it.

I am presently working with the Premier and the Treasurer to come up with a rescue package for the QFRA fund, to ensure the future financial security of the QFRA fund and the future financial security of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. The PricewaterhouseCoopers report is a sad indictment on the previous Minister. It is a sad indictment on the previous Government.

Time expired.
