



Speech by

**JOHN MICKEL**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Hansard 27 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**Estimates Committee A**

**Report No. 1**

**Mr MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (12.15 p.m.): At the outset I thank my fellow committee members for their cooperation throughout the Estimates process. I extend my appreciation also to the support staff allocated to our committee. They did an outstanding job. While I am thanking the staff of the Parliament, I wish also to thank the staff of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee—Neil, Sandy and Meg—for their excellent work and the timely support and advice they provide my committee. I extend my gratitude also to the long-suffering people in the Parliamentary Library, who handle the many requests and tasks that I ask of them, and also to Hansard, who make many of our contributions at least legible.

**Mr Palaszczyk:** "Legible" or "readable"?

**Mr MICKEL:** Both; in my case, it is "legible".

I particularly welcome the fact that Mr Speaker indicated that the Standing Orders Committee would be meeting this year. I say that for this reason: I think it is high time that the Standing Orders Committee of this Parliament met. This year our committee has examined two cases of contempt of the Parliament. In one instance I believe that situation arose just through ignorance on behalf of the member and probably on behalf of the member of the public who behaved in a way that was found to be in contempt. I think it is high time that the contempt procedures within this Parliament were examined. I think they should be incorporated into the Standing Orders in much the same way as they have been in the New Zealand Parliament. The Standing Orders Committee should meet more regularly than it does at present in order to overhaul our antiquated Standing Orders. It is not clear to many new members which orders apply—Sessional Orders or Standing Orders. I enjoin each and every member to recognise that, if we at least incorporate the contempt procedures within the Standing Orders, we will be taking a big step towards improving the Parliament.

The only other point that I wish to make is this: quite rightly we adjourn to the upper Chamber when going into a committee process to examine the Budget. Perhaps it is time we undertook some costings to see whether the Committee stage for the sorts of Bills that seem to drag on—and I notice the Minister for Mines and Energy in the Chamber; he would recall the marathon session that he went through; and I can see a similar session occurring with respect to the Sugar Industry Bill—could be undertaken in the upper Chamber, with the rest of the legislative procedures being carried on in this Chamber. What I am saying is not revolutionary. It is precisely what is happening now in Canberra. I believe it would streamline procedures. I do not know what the cost implications of that are. That would mean that some of us would not have to listen to long and boring tomes from some members, particularly in the Committee stage of the Bill.

**Mr Hamill:** People always hang on every word of your speeches!

**Mr MICKEL:** I will ignore that provocative remark by the Treasurer.

I wish also to praise the Leader of the Opposition. In a situation when the numbers were tight for his own Government, he took an action that I considered to be in the best interests of the Parliament, that is, he allowed the 6 o'clock debate to go ahead. I know that a lot of members find them an intrusive waste of time. However, the current procedures need improvement in that I do not

believe we need a deliberative vote every night. I would prefer to see the issue become a definite matter of public importance. In that way, the issue could be talked out. I realise that, with the closeness of the numbers not only in this Parliament but also in the previous Parliament, a vote maybe needs to be taken because one side has to embarrass the other, but I hope that we can move to a situation where each evening we can have a definite matter of public importance. I think that is important for the Government. It is equally important for the Opposition to do that.

I also want to praise the Premier for the extension he has given to private members to be able to introduce private members' Bills. When we are elected into this Parliament we are private members. The Premier has allowed that to happen. He indicated that it was expensive, but I think it is very worth while for the constituents whom we are elected to represent.

Time expired.

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