



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
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Report No. 1

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.42 a.m.): At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to the staff of Parliament House who look after us so well during the course of the parliamentary term. I refer particularly to the catering staff who do such a wonderful job in the cafeteria and the Strangers and Members' Dining Rooms. A very good range of food is available and it is a pleasure to be able to entertain visitors at Parliament House.

Our security staff do a great job in keeping us safe. They make sure that they balance the competing interests of ensuring that people have free and open access to their Parliament whilst protecting parliamentarians from threats that are made from time to time.

The staff in the travel office do a great job. In the 10 years that I have been in this place I have not had one single hassle with the travel staff. Their work has been excellent and timely. I wish I could say the same about the time when I was a Minister. I used to turn up at hotels, only to find that Amex or MSB, or whoever was looking after the matter, had not made the necessary bookings. Those organisations could learn a lesson from our parliamentary travel officers.

The administration section does a great job in processing requests, salaries, and such things. The staff are always timely with advice when it is needed. I also wish to refer to the information technology section. A significantly increased workload has been placed on this section over the past five, six, seven or eight years—or even longer—as we have seen new technology come on board. That technology has probably made the work of parliamentarians a little easier, but I am not sure if we are any further ahead because everyone else has the ability to use modern technology. Consequently, I am not sure that we ever get ahead. The staff does a good job. I know that there is great demand for their services. When we are dealing with technology—and particularly computer technology—we find that there are always quirks in the system. There will be quirks in the modem rack or quirks in the hardware that is provided to officers. The staff need to attend to these sorts of things from time to time. I know that the gremlins in the system create a significant amount of concern for members whose system goes down for a week. However, that problem is more concerned with the hardware than the service that we receive in this Parliament.

The Hansard staff do a great job. When I read speeches after they have been delivered in this place, I am amazed to see how the staff can make the most basic member sound as if he had delivered the Gettysburg Address. The staff do a great job with their imagination. They put the commas and the words in the right place.

The Education and Protocol Office provides an invaluable service to the Parliament. It is great to be able to touch base with these people and to ask for assistance. We receive information packs that we can provide to young people who are travelling out of our electorates. I wish to congratulate all the other staff of the Parliament whom I have not individually mentioned.

One matter of concern to members is the lifts. I am aware that other colleagues will be mentioning this matter as well. This was a major design fault when this place was planned back in the early 1970s. I understand that some additional computerisation work has been undertaken in relation to

the lifts, but we still have problems. I am not sure whether we can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. I know that it would be very expensive to address the problems associated with the lifts.

My new accommodation is on the 22nd floor of the Annexe. I have not quite become acclimatised to it because I was previously on the third floor. I used to walk up to the fifth floor in order to come across to the Chamber. I am not used to delays with the lifts. Yesterday morning, at around 7.30, the delay was about 10 to 15 minutes. That might have been unusual, but we do have these problems. There are times when members need to use the lifts in order to be present at divisions in the Chamber. People who should not be using the lifts at such times are continuing to use the lifts.

The member for Cairns touched on the matter of accommodation. I believe we need to address community perceptions from time to time. There is a perception that we live in five-star accommodation. Our accommodation is very small, but it is comfortable and it is adequate. It is certainly not five-star, but it is adequate for what we need. I think people have the wrong perception about the accommodation that is available for members. The accommodation is sufficient to allow us to do our job but it is not over the top. We need to educate the community about this matter so that they have a better understanding of the situation.
