



Speech by

**Hon. K. LINGARD**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

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Hansard 2 August 2001

**APPROPRIATION BILLS [ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F]**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (3.06 p.m.): On behalf of opposition members, I thank all staff of Estimates Committee F for their organisational support, which I believe was excellent. I am not quite sure why the chairman of Estimates Committee F takes the cynical attitude she just displayed. I did not really note it during our committee meetings.

However, there were a couple of things I was disappointed with in relation to Estimates Committee F. It was disappointing to turn up at the pre-hearing meeting on the estimates day to find the opposition members locked out of the room while the government members continued their meeting, with the opposition members being asked to wait outside.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive. It is totally untrue. I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr LINGARD:** It is not untrue, but I withdraw it.

I also found it disconcerting that opposition members were not able to ask the first question, that government members were asked to ask the first question.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** I rise to a point of order. Again, that is totally offensive and inaccurate. The process was explained to opposition members. They obviously did not hear it or did not respond and we went ahead.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Mickel): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr LINGARD:** I note also that the minutes of the meeting did not state that the government members were to ask the first question. Obviously, it was planned that a couple of Dorothy Dixers would be asked of the minister and the minister was going to slam into opposition members. To the member for Algeester let me say this: there are people on that committee who have had much more experience in those portfolios than the member has ever had. They have had a lifetime in those portfolios and know a lot more about them than the member does. It was unfair that government members were able to ask Dorothy Dix questions to the minister to allow the minister to slam into opposition members right from the start of the meeting. It might be cute to the member and the Minister for Education, but let me say this for future reference: I find it unreal that the member for Woodridge would feel happy about being able to ask Dorothy Dix questions to the minister to allow her to slam into opposition members.

The greatest concern in relation to employment and training is that the people of Queensland have been deceived by the ALP, especially in 1998 when they said they would get the unemployment level down to five per cent. It is deceptive to say that the government is even trying to get the unemployment rate down to five per cent because the Premier has already said that it is not possible to get it down to five per cent. The Treasury figures were worked out on eight per cent unemployment. The Minister for Employment himself also said it was unrealistic to think that it could reach five per cent in this particular term. So the government is being deceptive to the people of Queensland.

It is also being extremely deceptive in all of these programs of training organisations, especially when we see in the estimates that, of 10,500 traineeships, 5,200 fell over. It is also being deceptive when we consider that 52 per cent of apprenticeships are falling over. I suggested that there should be a summit of employers, employees and government officials who can sit down and work out what is going wrong. If it is that the employers are doing something wrong in the system, the government

needs to know. If it is that the employees are not doing the right thing, it needs to know. If it is that the government officials and the training organisations are not doing their job, it needs to know. The minister would say that there is an ombudsman, but I would say that it is not working. This minister's figures clearly show that it is not working. To have 52 per cent of apprenticeships falling over and to have half of the traineeships falling over indicates that something is wrong.

As far as the Education portfolio is concerned, it was disconcerting to see so much federal money in there which is not being recognised in the budget. As I go around to the teachers and the principals—and people in south-east Queensland know that we met with principals the other day—I see that they are concerned that their P&C associations and organisations are raising money to pay for teacher aides. They are concerned that, because of the devolution of authority on buildings, they have to pay for some of the building materials and repairs themselves. They are worried about suspensions and the fact that they are not getting support from the central office, and they are certainly worried about drugs in schools. I would say to the bureaucrats: yes, it is all right to talk about the New Basics and key learning areas. As I go around I find that some people are still concerned about the curriculum. However, the biggest worry for our schools is the expense on the ground, the expense of teacher aides, the expense of maintaining their schools and the lack of support in the areas of drugs in schools and the suspension of students.

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