



Speech by

Mr T. MALONE

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (3.40 p.m.): It gives me a lot of pleasure to rise to speak on report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A. I will dwell on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and later deal with the Children's Commission and then State Development.

As the Premier said, performance bonuses are a management tool that all business people use and use very effectively. Incentive bonuses are part and parcel of employing people nowadays. The difference between how business uses incentive bonuses and how the government uses them is that in business they are clearly identifiable. The transcript of Estimates Committee A shows a refusal to answer by the directors-general in respect of individual performance bonuses. It seems to me that, in the interests of government accountability and transparency, the taxpayers of Queensland have a right to know which directors-general are performing and which are not. Indeed, who decides the benchmarks? From what base is the remuneration of a director-general calculated? Indeed, who sets the performance criteria? In answer to that very question Minister Spence admitted that ministers are not asked how much of the performance bonus should be paid to the director-general. It seems to me that a number of questions should be asked.

I am certainly not against performance bonuses—I think they are a very important management tool—but I do think, in the interests of transparent government, they need to be identified and brought out into the open. Directors-general are employed by the taxpayers of Queensland and the sorts of performance bonuses they receive and how they are paid should be clearly identified.

I find it difficult to understand why the Children's Commissioner does not have the power to act upon concerns relating to unassessed cases in the Families Department. As I understand from the estimates, there were 2,249 complaints, and we do not really know what has happened to them. The assessments are supposedly carried out within 28 days. I think a lot of questions need to be asked in respect of the way the Children's Commissioner is able to handle those cases. Children are our biggest resource and we need to look after them.

I refer to the Dalrymple Bay lease. As most members would know, Dalrymple Bay is a big part of my electorate and contains a very significant piece of infrastructure. It is disappointing to see that the National Bank has withdrawn from that negotiation. I would expect that that is continuing. It is of concern to me that we have gone so far down the track and suddenly things seem to have fallen over.

Mr Mackenroth: Nothing has fallen over.

Mr MALONE: That is fine. It is later than was expected, as I understand. Quite a substantial amount of investment is to take place at Dalrymple Bay. Maybe the government's grab for royalties has a bit to do with it. Where is the budget left in light of the \$100 million that may not be forthcoming from the National Bank syndicate? There are certainly interesting questions that need to be answered.

I refer to the Australian Magnesium Corporation. A lot of people are very keen to make sure that resource is developed and the project moves ahead. It has been on the cards for a long time and it is a tremendous resource. Certainly I am very keen to make sure it goes ahead.

Time expired.