



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 19 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial and Opposition Handbooks

Hon. P.D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.31 a.m.): Today I want to correct an oversight which exists in both the Ministerial Handbook section 4.12.9 and the Opposition Handbook section 4.12.6.

When members of the House undertook overseas travel in the early nineties, if my information is correct, the Goss government established a practice that within a month members had to report to this House. We are not changing that, but within that report there was a requirement to provide an estimate of the cost. The difficulty is that with Amex cards and so on the bills are not in within a month and, as the Leader of the Opposition discovered recently when he had to extend the time for the reporting on this, it becomes very difficult to get an accurate figure. I have had the same experience.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection. Most members of the House have not been including an estimate and indeed, as the Deputy Premier indicated, that applied also to the Leader of the Opposition back in June 2002. What happened was that—and this is actually helpful—subsequent to us coming to office I brought in a process that every six months all the accounts had to be tabled in this parliament. The full-year reports are ticked off by the Auditor-General. In other words, they are real costs, not estimated costs. What I have done is change the handbook for both the opposition and the government to provide this—

Note that the total estimated cost of the travel is to be included in the report and/or the actual costs are to be reported in the Public Report of Office Expenses which is currently required to be presented to parliament on a six monthly basis in accordance with section 3.8 of this handbook.

In other words, it is the actual cost. If people want to put in an estimated one they can, but it is the actual costs. I do not want anyone to think that I am seeking to hide the estimated costs of my recent visit. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition has quite rightly reported that his estimated cost was \$62,500. On the basis of advice from the Ministerial Services Branch within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, I am advised that for the equivalent three people that the Opposition Leader has chosen my cost was \$61,564.92. I have advised the House. I have been consistent with the old rule. It is now changed forthwith and therefore I would expect people, both ministers and opposition travellers, to in fact include it in the six-monthly report.