



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL (ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E)

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak to the Estimates Committee E report. I believe our estimates committee process plays a very important role in enabling members of parliament to better question ministers about matters relevant to their respective portfolios. More importantly, I think Estimates Committee E, which I was involved in, was able to demonstrate that, notwithstanding the different political views that all members of parliament have on our committee, we were able to work together effectively notwithstanding we had different views on a number of issues and bearing in mind that there was a vote taken. Notwithstanding that, business did continue.

We also demonstrated how the opposition, the National Party representatives, Cate Molloy, the Liberal member on the committee and I as an Independent were able to work together to pass a motion which called on the minister for the environment to table documents. History will speak for itself as to the effectiveness of the outcome of that resolution, but reports were duly presented to the committee and they are now part of the *Hansard* record.

I note that a number of members have criticised the current committee process when they have spoken to the various committee reports. I believe that, without this committee, this parliament would be worse off. I am prepared to consider and support any moves from any member of either this parliament or any future parliament—if I happen to be a member of a future parliament—to improve and strengthen our committee system and allow the committees to do the important work which I believe they have to.

On the issue of the Education portfolio, during the committee hearings I questioned the minister about the Nambour Special School's future and the role it will play as well as the great pressures on our special schools in south-east Queensland. Only last week, I attended a meeting of the Nambour Special School P&C. They were aware of the minister's response to my question, and I put on the record now that they are preparing a letter for me to present to the minister at the next sitting. I hope I will be able to organise a future meeting with the senior management of the Nambour Special School and the Minister for Education so they can talk about some of the real concerns they have at the moment.

One issue I raised during the hearing which is of very real concern to me is the behaviour of some students and some parents who have children attending our state schools. It really concerns me that we have some real behaviour problems in grade 1 at some of our schools. Speaking to some of the teachers and teacher aides, I found it very concerning that our teachers, our teacher aides and our students—including boys and girls in grade 1—have to put up with some deplorable behaviour. I hope we can review the current behaviour management plans and policies, which are due to be finalised by the end of September, in perhaps six months to see if they are effectively delivering the outcomes which I, the minister and many members of parliament hope will be delivered.

These behaviour management plans and policies are needed to ensure that boys and girls, teachers and parents get the best out of our public education system in Queensland. If the system does need to be finetuned and if further changes do need to be made, I hope this parliament will have the strength of character to meet that challenge and make those moves to ensure we provide the best education system

possible for students in Queensland. I also would like to thank the minister on behalf of my constituents who have seen a significant increase in the removal of asbestos roofs in my electorate and right across the Sunshine Coast.

On the issue of the environment, I questioned the minister about when we will see a final decision on the future certainty of the horseriding trails on the Sunshine Coast, especially in the Mapleton forest area. We are still waiting for a final decision. I know many horse riders in my electorate read with interest the minister's answer to my question. It certainly created a bit of controversy in the community, so we are looking forward to the minister's final announcement on the proposed horseriding trails.

More importantly, we are looking for an announcement on the timing of the construction work which will be required to ensure that the alternative horseriding trails are accessible and safe for our horse riders—bearing in mind that many horse riders are children or elderly people, not just parents. On the issue of local government, there was discussion about the Traveston Dam and I would like to report to the House that on 25 August we hope to have an inspection of Paradise Dam.

Time expired.