




Speech by

David Gibson

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (8.35 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate with regard to the examination by the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee of the expenditure of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. At the outset I give thanks to the three ministers who were involved for their professionalism and that of their directors-general and departmental staff who made themselves available to the committee. In all cases we found that they held themselves to an incredibly high standard and we thank them for that.

I also put on record our thanks to the committee chair, the member for Lockyer, for doing a wonderful job. I also thank the new committee members who were involved—the new members from all sides of parliament. Whilst obviously there were some games being played, overall there was a desire to do what the estimates process was designed to do, and that is to examine the expenditure of government.

At this time I make the point—and we have heard much from the Labor Party—that their ignorance of parliamentary procedure is nothing short of outstanding. They fail to recognise that it is the parliament's role to hold the executive to account, and the parliament does that—both government and non-government members. It is appropriate for the non-government members to have over 50 per cent of the time, but it is also a requirement for the parliament—both government and non-government members—to hold the executive to account. The failure of the Labor Party to grasp that simple concept of the Westminster system highlights their ignorance of how parliamentary procedure works. That is evident in the way in which they have run this state as we now see the challenges.

The examination of the various departments that we had the opportunity to undertake was comprehensive. The estimates process that we have now—the new design of portfolio based committees that sit throughout the whole year and come to examine at the time of estimates—has shown that there is a greater consolidation of corporate knowledge and we are able to utilise that, both government and non-government members, in examining expenditure. I do not intend to go through the various portfolio areas and their expenditure. That is outlined in the report as are the highlights of those various areas.

I do wish to touch on a couple of areas that are pertinent to my electorate. I know that the people of Gympie have been particularly excited by the Newman government's commitment to agriculture and tourism because they have a major impact on our area. Agriculture is an area in which my electorate has had a strong involvement. The commitment to doubling agricultural production is one that we recognise can occur. The history of Gympie is that in the past it was a mining area. We were very pleased to hear the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and his departmental officers give a comprehensive review of the mine-capping program. Whilst no active mining is occurring in the area, from time to time as mine shafts collapse we find there is a need for the capping program to continue. It has been in place for a long time. Certainly the work that is carried out in that area is valued by all members of my community.

Finally, I wish to touch upon the portfolio of Environment and Heritage Protection. Gympie has a great interest in both areas of this portfolio. In terms of heritage protection, we continue to preserve those

buildings from the gold rush in the mid to late 1800s—a gold rush that saved the state of Queensland. My electorate also has a great affinity with the environment. We remember the days when Labor tried to destroy the Mary Valley and embarked on a process of environmental vandalism and ignoring the science. We commend the minister for his science based approach. Unlike what we saw with ideology from those opposite, we now have a minister who understands the importance of making policy decisions based on science. That is the way we need to move forward every time.

I again thank all members of the committee. I thank our chair because without his guidance we would not have been able to go through the portfolios that we did in the time that was allocated to us.