



Speech by

Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

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

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (8.15 pm): I rise to make a brief comment on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's consideration of estimates. It was very interesting to see this process in place. It was great to see the ministers doing a great job of explaining expenditure which comes to some \$863 million—almost \$1 billion of expenditure. That is very important. I congratulate the Treasurer on a fine budget, which is what we are examining here.

I note the comments of the deputy chair of the committee, the member for South Brisbane, who has just had a rant about the gun laws. The committee did not actually examine anything to do with the gun laws. So I do not know why that was brought into her contribution. I realise that Jackie is new at the whole process and she has a lot to learn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer, please refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr RICKUSS: The member for South Brisbane has a lot to learn and she is still trying to get the process right. She has to work out that we were actually looking at the portfolios of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Environment and Heritage Protection; and National Resources and Mines. That is what we looked at in our examination of this bill. I congratulate the ministers for the fact that they answered the questions clearly and succinctly, particularly the questions related to their portfolios. They did struggle a bit with the questions that were not related to their portfolios simply for the fact that they probably did not have the issues before them.

I note one of the dissenting reports from the member for South Brisbane complaining about the number of questions that she asked. The member of Katter's Australian Party and the member of the ALP make up 25 per cent of the committee. They asked 60 per cent of the questions; they asked 60 per cent of the questions.

Mr Cox: What percentage of the committee did they make up?

Mr RICKUSS: Twenty-five per cent of the committee and they asked 60 per cent of the questions. They are still stuck in this old paradigm of 'It's our turn to ask questions.' I realise that we have new members on the committees but the CLA is not in that paradigm of 'It's your turn; it's my turn' or whatever. It is about how we actually manage the process. The process I think was managed very efficiently. If a question was asked by a member of the opposition or a member of the Katter party then a supplementary question could come from one of our members who had an interest in that same area. That, to me, was common sense and made the examination of the estimates flow much more realistically.

Ms Trad: So what about questions on notice, Ian?

Mr RICKUSS: I take the interjection of the member for South Brisbane about questions on notice. I rang her up on the day that questions on notice were due to be in and we had discussions. I had a discussion with Shane too about their questions on notice. We could have just knocked out a heap of their

questions on notice because they had made one question into three questions, so instead of having 10 questions they actually had about 15 questions. So instead of doing that I rang the member for South Brisbane and the member for Dalrymple so they could put in the appropriate questions on notice. I realise this is a new process and it does take a while to get around these sorts of issues.

I actually gave the same leeway to some of our members who were a bit late getting their questions in, so that worked all right. This is a learning process. This government has only been in place for 200 days, I think it is now. I must admit that I am sure the process will be more streamlined next year, but I really do take issue with some of the poor comments made by the member in her conclusion—such as that the three ministers were anxious to avoid sustained questioning. I find that hard to believe. The opposition were actually starting to run out of questions. I would refer to the members opposite and say, 'Have you finished?' and their answer would be, 'Yes.' They would be finished before I had asked our members to ask their questions, so I cannot see how they can sustain that. Like I said, 25 per cent of the committee asked 60 per cent of the questions. With that, I congratulate the ministers and the Treasurer.