




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 6 August 2014

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, Report

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.14 pm): I rise to speak to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's report on the estimates hearings. I acknowledge the minister's support with regard to drought relief. I think that is very important. Members understand how difficult the situation has been over the last two years. I believe at the moment that we need to ensure that we have molasses stored. I hope we get the rain. At times when it is very dry molasses is beneficial. We are always trying to track it down throughout the country. There is huge demand for molasses. I believe that we need to act on that quickly and be prepared for when we need it.

I know that the government has indicated its desire to double agricultural production. One of the things that I am disappointed about is that I am hearing that there has been an increase in the application permit fee for clearing more than 250,000 hectares from \$5,600 to \$11,000. I think the reason people are making those applications is that they are in drought. They need to grow and expand. They need extra fuel to feed their cattle. To hit them with an extra \$5,400 bill is not right. They do not have the money for that.

I brought to the minister's attention the issue of stocking red claw in the Tinaroo Dam. I commend the minister for accepting my invitation to speak to the people of the Tablelands and have a look at the situation himself. He spelt out quite a few reasons why he will not restock the red claw. One reason is that red claw is not native. The Mitchell River is a native ground for the red claw. When we have massive floods the Barron River and the Mitchell River intertwine. This allows the red claw to move from one river to another.

We were at a forum in Townsville which the Minister for State Development was at. He said, 'What can we do to provide jobs and support for rural and regional Queensland?' Rather than look at the technicalities, let us look at the fact that when DPI scientists stocked that dam it created jobs. The caravan parks were filled with tourists. The bait and tackle shops and the outdoor shops employed people. This is as a result of red claw, but they are looking at the silly technicalities.

There is already a non-native species in that dam—the barramundi. Sleepy cod was put in there as well. They are worried about red claw. The minister indicated that he was greatly concerned about the native crayfish. While there was no red claw, the barramundi and the sleepy cod targeted the native crayfish. By having red claw in there the native crayfish will be sustained. I appreciate that the minister said that he will meet with the scientists and professionals that stock that dam.

The resources industry is part of the Minister for Natural Resources portfolio. One of the things that I am very concerned about is the sale of the Townsville to Mount Isa line, especially given that a profit of \$470 million goes back to the state. This is something that we cannot afford to sell, especially when it gives a return. All that is needed is an upgrade of some of those sidings.

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The potential sale of the Port of Townsville and the Townsville to Mount Isa railway line was not the subject—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): What is your point of order, Minister?

Mr CRIPPS: It is irrelevant to discuss it in the portfolio estimates hearings for natural resources and mines or environment or agriculture.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Dalrymple, I would ask you to please keep your comments relevant to the estimates of the portfolio you are talking about.

Mr KNUTH: We want to see the resources industry grow. We are seeing irrigation now expanding in the Flinders River catchment. However, we need a rail line to support the rural industry but also to support the resources industry. When you look at investments, what do they suggest? 'Sell it off. This is a great opportunity for this money to go back to the state.' I put a question to the minister in regard to Ben Lomond—

(Time expired)