




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Finance and Administration Committee, Report

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.20 pm): This was my first time on an estimates committee and I have to say that I was a little underwhelmed. There was a lot of talk about openness and transparency, but some of that was a little bit hard to pick up. We have already heard about the difference in the time allocated between the estimates hearing last year and this year in that the Premier was two hours less. There were a lot of questions that were asked that did not really get much in the line of detailed answers. The role of Terry Mackenroth is one that springs to mind very quickly as does the remuneration levels of some of the staff, and the information that was provided afterwards regarding that issue certainly did not really provide an answer either. We have also heard about the absence of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. We certainly had some questions for her, but she did not appear.

The Treasurer was also a little short on time compared to the process undertaken last year by the previous government—one hour and 49 minutes less, as I understand it. We just heard about the articulate answers that the Treasurer gave. I have to say that he certainly did give some very long replies but not much in the line of answers to some of the questions. A lot of those replies seemed more dedicated to criticising the previous government than anything to do with his own portfolio. As far as openness and transparency are concerned, I was really disappointed. The member for Barron River made a comment about not being in the same room as some people given some of the comments that have been made. I asked the Parliamentary Library to provide a copy of an article that was in the *Courier-Mail* the following morning written by Steven Wardill. I want to quote the article, because it is another view on the process. The article states—

ANNASTACIA Palaszczuk and Labor yesterday sullied budget estimates, the very parliamentary process they purport to protect.

They used their numbers to stymie questions and they deployed distractions to divert attention from the hearings.

Queensland governments always take a siege mentality towards estimates.

But it's particularly galling from an administration that touts itself as the harbinger of a proper, accountable process.

Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg yesterday complained Jo-Ann Miller's referral to the Ethics Committee was a 'protection racket' for the Police Minister.

It was really, though, protection for the Premier.

If it was a court of law, yesterday's committee chair, Labor's Di Farmer, would have been removed for bias given her appallingly partisan approach.

She cruelled Opposition lines of questioning when she deemed them repetitive or out of order and then allowed Palaszczuk to not just avoid questions but to actually ask them.

It goes on with a couple of other red herrings that were run out earlier this morning and it finishes by stating—

Palaszcuk raised expectations she'd treat estimates with respect. Yesterday she proved, once again, it is easier for governments to talk about accountability than endure it.

That article was written by another person who observed estimates very closely and I have to say that my view of the procedure closely reflects those comments.