




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2018

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (6.40 pm): As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee I have now experienced my first estimates hearing, sitting through nearly 11 hours, and what an experience it was! Estimates is meant to be a chance to look over how the government is spending the hard-earned taxes of Queenslanders to make sure that the people we represent are getting value for money. I am sad to say that, for the most part, this process was a complete disappointment. We saw an orchestrated protection racket run by the member for Logan. The word 'imputation' was thrown around whenever the questioning got even slightly uncomfortable for the government. I did not think it was possible to have so many Dorothy Dixers and I certainly feel sorry for the poor people who probably fell asleep as they were writing them. I certainly almost did as I was listening to them.

The Premier and ministers were shielded by standing orders, with only 50 out of 89 minutes allocated to the opposition for questions of the Premier allowed to get through.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order, members.

Mr O'CONNOR: We had nearly 40 minutes of time wasted through government disruption and points of order. Many of the members of the media gallery and even a former Labor Speaker have written about how there needs to be change. This parliament needs a process that does what it is supposed to do and is open and transparent.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Logan!

Mr O'CONNOR: More specifically about the budget and the area I represent, perhaps the biggest challenge we face in the electorate of Bonney is unemployment. So many other aspects of a good life stem from having a job.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Logan will cease interjecting.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you. I am not taking interjections from the cheap seats. My electorate of Bonney has the highest unemployment on the Gold Coast with the latest figures showing a rate of 7.2 per cent. It concerns me that over 2,000 people whom I represent are unemployed. They are getting no help from this government.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members.

Mr O'CONNOR: We saw the Back to Work SEQ program raised with the Premier in the public hearing. For many jobseekers in my area, this program used to offer incentives of \$15,000 for businesses to put on long-term unemployed jobseekers and \$20,000 to employ young or mature age jobseekers who have been unemployed for at least four weeks. It is no longer a program that should have 'SEQ' in the title. Unemployed jobseekers from the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane local government areas no longer have this vital support to help them get a job. That is with double digit youth unemployment in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, and sitting at 8.4 per cent on the Gold Coast.

Overall, these hearings were a farce. We need to have genuine engagement and transparency. Queensland deserves a government with a plan and a clear vision to ensure that this is once again a state of opportunity.