



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

**State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development
Committee, Report**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the committee's report on its examination of the estimates. I want to do something different and refer to the statement of reservation, or the dissenting report, from the opposition. On reading through it, it sounds very familiar. Those of us who are looking at the reports should examine the opposition's statements of reservation to all of the committee reports, because the same language keeps cropping up in them. I thank the member for Macalister for her research on this issue. We heard that language today—'The budget showed that Labor is cutting infrastructure spending at a time'. We heard the Leader of the Opposition say that. As the member for Warrego was delivering her speech, I was reading 'these latest scandals provide significant questions about the government's openness'—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr WHITING: I say to the member for Logan that there are so many good bits in it. I commend these dissenting reports to all members of the government so that they can read along with what the opposition members will be saying in their contributions, because it is all written down in these dissenting reports. That shows that the members opposite are not even trying. They talk a big game, but then they just simply turn up and go through the motions.

Earlier today Minister Lynham said that the opposition had a fizzer of a question time. They also had a fizzer at estimates. There was no real examination of the budget. The questions were lacking in substance, no matter how much time we gave them. To quote from their excellently written report, they were 'frustrated that more time could not be spent examining the budget'. I was pretty generous with the amount of time we gave to the opposition and crossbenchers. It was substantially more time than we gave to government MPs. That extra time did not make any difference whatsoever. The questions were still lacking in substance. There was no drive. To quote what the member for Woodridge has said many times, if you want better answers ask better questions. It is a basic premise.

There are other examples of what was lacking in the examination by the opposition. The word 'drought' was mentioned 16 times but only one time by an opposition MP. This is a party that says they are the voice of the farmer, yet only once did they mentioned the drought and that was when they talked about Southern Downs and Emu Swamp Dam. That gives us a chance to highlight the great news we delivered to Southern Downs Regional Council when the Premier visited.

Not once was forestry raised by the opposition. There was not one question about forestry, a very substantial part of this portfolio. Once again the so-called voice of the regions, the voice of the farmer, has not talked about drought or forestry. Disaster recovery was mentioned just once in response to a question by the opposition. That was by Dr Woods in response to a question from the member for Gympie about prickly acacia. A crossbencher asked a question about category C disaster assistance and another crossbencher asked a question about mutual disaster assistance. I emphasise that there were no questions from the opposition specifically about disaster recovery. I remind members that, as the Treasurer has said, in Queensland we have had 84 disasters causing more than \$15 billion worth of damage to public infrastructure. The LNP should be paying more attention to disaster recovery. It should be paying more attention to climate change. That is essential.

There is a strong story to tell about what we have done in the area of disaster recovery. We learnt from estimates that the Queensland Reconstruction Authority manages a program worth \$2.399 billion that covered 23 events from 2017 through to 2019 and gave out \$23 million, with the support of the federal government, to support the Queensland program of infrastructure renewal and recovery. We learnt from estimates how much the opposition was exposed as having no real agenda. It had a fizzer.