



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.21 pm): I start by thanking all members who participated in the estimates hearing of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. Thanks also to the secretariat. I always like estimates. We always learn something. The question is: what did we learn from the LNP in 2021? May I say, we learnt nothing positive, of course.

Mr Mellish: Nothing's changed.

Mr WHITING: Nothing has changed. What we did learn is that the LNP cannot recognise the passage of time. In their statement of reservation they claim that there was limited time available for non-government members to ask questions. By my calculations, the truth is this: they had 65 per cent of the time for questions with the Deputy Premier. That includes 75 per cent of the time in the local government area. They had 66 per cent of the time with the minister for agriculture. They had 61 per cent of the time with the Minister for Manufacturing. From what I understand, that is 5¼ hours worth of questions versus 2½ hours of questions for government members. Clearly, they had ample opportunity to ask decent questions. Nobody stopped them. They only stopped themselves.

We also learnt that LNP members do not quite understand the standing orders. They complained in their statement of reservation about 'constant interruptions and points of order'. If we look at standing order 115, it states—

- (b) Questions shall not contain:
- (i) lengthy or subjective preambles;
 - (ii) arguments;
 - (iii) inferences;
 - (iv) imputations;
 - (v) hypothetical ...

It is very clear and it is in black and white how a member is to ask a question. The member for Warrego clearly does not understand this. I do not think she quite gets estimates. She virtually asked the same questions as last year. Instead of asking questions about dog parks, this year she asked about lemons, cattle yards and flowers. As the Deputy Premier said in response—

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr WHITING: Flowers is a nice one. I like that one. The Deputy Premier said in response to the member's questioning—

There are clear processes available for councils to receive advice. That process is not to forward it to the member for Warrego to ask us here at estimates.

How ironic that the opposition says that the process is broken when they are the ones turning up with the same questions, looking for political 'gotchas' and breaching standing orders. As we on this side have constantly said, 'If you want better answers, ask better questions.'

What we learnt from the member for Burleigh this year was very interesting. We learnt that he is probably not very interested in the estimates process. He had a shocker this year—more so than usual. He is the Latrell Mitchell of Queensland parliament. He barged recklessly into the fray. He was sent off once. Ideally he should have been sent off for longer, but I will take the blame for that. There was one issue when it comes to his behaviour that should be addressed. He did get ejected for being disruptive and for constantly interjecting. It was not because he asked a question. This is what he claimed and tweeted on the day—

Gee one question to the Minister for Agriculture, apparently Labor didn't like it so I have been thrown out of estimates for an hour. That's how bad estimates has gotten.

That is not true. I table a copy of that tweet.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 28 July 2021, from the Twitter account of the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, in relation to the estimates hearing of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee [1278](#).

I did think for a while about whether we should pursue him for a breach of the standing orders. Standing order 266(13) states—

... publishing a false or misleading account of proceedings before the House or a committee.

Honesty, can I call a tweet of 2½ lines a report? That would be very generous. Perhaps I would not want to glorify that by calling it a report. It is more a thought bubble. It is useful to point out that the member tweeted more than he asked questions on the day.

What was new from the opposition this year was the conflict-of-interest stunt. I would like to say good try but it was not. I do not think they even made a good case for it being a perceived conflict of interest by any measure. No-one in our hearing raised the issue that the member for Gympie is a member of AgForce, the member for Burleigh is a part owner of a brewery, and we discussed the craft brewing policy and the member for Maroochydore has some form of ownership of industrial sheds through a family trust, which she could arguably benefit from even more. I did not think that was an issue, so I let it go.

(Time expired)