



Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.30 am): I rise to make a brief contribution in relation to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I fondly think of this as a very important part of keeping the traditions and the history of Queensland in the right and proper order. I thank all of the folk who have been involved, particularly the staff here at Parliament House, for the wonderful job they do in keeping us on the straight and narrow in terms of our requirements and also providing wonderful service to add to the information that we can provide to the people of Queensland about our House.

I always think of the parliamentary precinct, which this appropriation bill alludes to, as something similar to the smallest country in the world, Vatican City. We have the Speaker who is akin to the Pope, if you like, and he has his personal assistant, the Clerk of the Parliament, running the financial matters—a bit like George Pell did for Vatican City. It is very important that we make sure that they are properly funded and that came through in the estimates process.

The questions asked by members of parliament, both government and opposition, are to make sure the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill delivers the outcomes that are needed. The major refurbishment of the Parliamentary Annexe is taking a lot of time and commitment from parliamentary officers. Importantly, in terms of the bill, we saw a large jump in the legal costs associated with the Parliamentary Service. As explained at estimates, and for members who were not there for that particular estimates hearing, that was due in large part to the so-called Peter Carne case which was originally budgeted at around the \$100,000 mark. That appeal was taken to the High Court, and Parliamentary Service appropriately joined in to the provision of that appeal to the High Court. It is very important for the outcomes of this parliament that the parliament—

Mr Power: Are you going to second-guess the High Court? Sub judice.

Mr STEVENS: I have a bit of a legal background, thank you, member for Logan. It was an important expenditure that was way over and above the original budgeted figures.

There are also major staffing costs coming through due to matters outside the control of the Parliamentary Service. They will be addressed throughout the year and provision will need to be made by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to accompany those very large increases in staff costs. That

will be a big challenge for the Parliamentary Service. We did notice a large drop in the catering income in the budgetary process. That is due to the relocation of members off site where they have to eat in other venues. It also took away some of the capacity here with the major refurbishment process of the Parliamentary Annex being quite interruptive.

One of the issues that I raised, and it is very close to my heart and I keep raising it, is that it is imperative that the refurbishment of the old building is continued long after we have gone. The stone restoration has been well financed in the past. There has been around a \$600,000-a-year contribution to replace the stonework. The fence is in dire need of support. We have put that on hold for the moment while the Parliamentary Annexe is being refurbished. That must come back onto the agenda to make sure that the best heritage building in Queensland is properly maintained for future generations. Our parliament has wonderful interest from students. It is good to see that our Parliamentary Service caters for that education process. Could we all be better off if the children of tomorrow were better educated about what we do today?