

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST 1953

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Legislative Assembly.

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT.

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FOURTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1953.

TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST, 1953.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

Pursuant to the proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 2 July, 1953, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 12 o'clock noon in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk of the Parliament read the proclamation.

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT.

The Clerk acquainted the House that His Excellency the Governor, not being able conveniently to be present in person this day, had been pleased to cause a commission to be issued under the public seal of the State, appointing the Hon. John Edmund Duggan, the Hon. Thomas Andrew Foley, and the Hon. Edward Joseph Walsh, Commissioners in order to the opening and holding of the present session of Parliament.

The Commissioners so appointed being seated on the dais, and the Clerk having read the commission,

The SENIOR COMMISSIONER (Hon. J. E. Duggan, Toowoomba) said: Hon. members, we have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to let you know—That as soon as the members of the Legislative Assembly have been sworn, the causes of this Parliament being called together will be declared to you: And, it being necessary that a Speaker be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you proceed to the election of one of your number to be your Speaker, and that you present such person so chosen to His Excellency the Governor at such time and place as His Excellency shall appoint.

The Acting Premier thereupon produced a commission under the public seal of the State, empowering him, the Hon. Thomas Andrew Foley, and the Hon. Edward Joseph Walsh or any of them, to administer to all or

any members or member of the House the oath or affirmation of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, which commission was then read to the House by the Clerk.

RETURN OF WRITS.

The Clerk informed the House that the writs for the various electoral districts had been returned to him severally endorsed as follows:—

Aubigny—Walter Beresford James
Gordon Sparkes.
Balonne—John Russell Taylor.
Barambah—Johannes Bjelke-Petersen.
Barcoo—Edward William Davis.
Baroona—William Power.
Belyando—Thomas Andrew Foley.
Bremer—James Donald.
Brisbane—John Henry Mann.
Bulimba—Robert James Gardner.
Bundaberg—Edward Joseph Walsh.
Buranda—Richard Kidston Brown.
Burdekin—Arthur Coburn.
Cairns—Thomas Martin Crowley.
Callide—Vincent Edward Jones.
Carnarvon—Paul Jerome Remigius
Hilton.
Carpentaria—Alfred James Smith.
Charters Towers—Arthur Jones.
Chernside—Alexander Tattenhall Dewar.
Clayfield—Harold Bourne Taylor.
Condamine—Leslie Frank Diplock.
Cook—Herbert Arthur Adair.
Cooroora—David Alan Low.
Coorparoo—Thomas Alfred Hiley.
Cunningham—Alan Roy Fletcher.
Darlington—Thomas Flood Plunkett.
Fassifern—Adolf Gustav Müller.
Fitzroy—James Clark.
Flinders—Ernest Joseph Riordan.
Fortitude Valley—Michael Timothy
Brosnan.
Gregory—George Henry Devries.
Houghton—Colin George McCathie.

Hinchinbrook—Cecil George Jesson.
 Ipswich—Ivor Marsden.
 Isis—Jack Charles Allan Pizzey.
 Ithaca—Leonard Eastment.
 Kedron—Eric Gayford Lloyd.
 Kelvin Grove—John Albert Turner.
 Koppel—Vivian Joseph Northcote Cooper.
 Kurilpa—Thomas Moores.
 Landsborough—George Francis Reuben Nicklin.
 Lockyer—Gordon William Wesley Chalk.
 Mackay—Frederick Dickson Graham.
 Mackenzie—Patrick James Whyte.
 Marodian—James Alfred Heading.
 Maryborough—David Farrell.
 Merthyr—William Matthew Moore.
 Mirani—Ernest Evans.
 Mount Coot-tha—Kenneth James Morris.
 Mount Gravatt—Felix Cyril Sigismund Dittmer.
 Mourilyan—Peter Byrne.
 Mulgrave—Charles Bernard English.
 Mundingburra—Thomas Aikens.
 Murrumba—David Eric Nicholson.
 Nash—Gregory Brian Kehoe.
 Norman—William Edward Baxter.
 North Toowoomba—Leslie Arnold Wood.
 Nundah—Frank Edward Roberts.
 Port Curtis—James Burrows.
 Rockhampton—James Larcombe.
 Roma—Alfred Dohring.
 Sandgate—Herbert Freemont Robinson.
 Sherwood—Thomas Caldwell Kerr.
 Somerset—Alexander James Skinner.
 South Brisbane—Vincent Clair Gair.
 Southport—Eric John Gaven.
 Tablelands—Harold Henry Collins.
 Toowong—Alan Whiteside Munro.
 Toowoomba—John Edmund Duggan.
 Townsville—George Keyatta.
 Warrego—John Joseph Dufficy.
 Warwick—Otto Ottosen Madsen.
 Whitsunday—Lloyd Henry Scurfield Roberts.
 Windsor—Thomas William Rasey.
 Wynnum—William Morrison Gunn.
 Yeronga—Henry Winston Noble.

The Clerk: I also inform the House that on the 16th day of July, 1953, an order in council was issued validating the election of John Russell Taylor, and Alfred James Smith as members to serve in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral districts of Balonne and Carpentaria respectively, notwithstanding that the poll was not taken at certain polling places in those electoral districts until 21 March, 1953, and 14 March, 1953, respectively.

MEMBERS SWORN.

The Commissioners, who, with other members of the Ministry had been sworn in before His Excellency the Governor on 30 and 31 July, 1953, and subscribed the roll,

then administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance to the following other members, who thereupon also subscribed the roll:—

Adair, Herbert Arthur, Esquire.
 Aikens, Thomas, Esquire.
 Baxter, William Edward, Esquire.
 Brosnan, Michael Timothy, Esquire.
 Brown, Richard Kidston, Esquire.
 Burrows, James, Esquire.
 Byrne, Peter, Esquire.
 Chalk, Gordon William Wesley, Esquire.
 Clark, James, Esquire.
 Coburn, Arthur, Esquire.
 Collins, The Honourable Harold Henry Cooper, Vivian Joseph Northcote, Esquire.
 Davis, Edward William, Esquire.
 Dewar, Alexander Tattenhall, Esquire.
 Diplock, Leslie Frank, Esquire.
 Dittmer, Felix Cyril Sigismund, Esquire.
 Dohring, Alfred, Esquire.
 Donald, James, Esquire.
 Dufficy, John Joseph, Esquire.
 Eastment, Leonard, Esquire.
 English, Charles Bernard, Esquire.
 Evans, Ernest, Esquire.
 Farrell, David, Esquire.
 Fletcher, Alan Roy, Esquire.
 Gardner, Robert James, Esquire.
 Gaven, Eric John, Esquire.
 Graham, Frederick Dickson, Esquire.
 Gair, William Morrison, Esquire.
 Heading, James Alfred, Esquire.
 Hiley, Thomas Alfred, Esquire.
 Jesson, Cecil George, Esquire.
 Jones, Vincent Edward, Esquire.
 Kehoe, Gregory Brian, Esquire.
 Kerr, Thomas Caldwell, Esquire.
 Larcombe, James, Esquire.
 Lloyd, Eric Gayford, Esquire.
 Low, David Alan, Esquire.
 Madsen, Otto Ottosen, Esquire.
 Mann, The Honourable John Henry Marsden, Ivor, Esquire.
 McCathie, Colin George, Esquire, B.A.
 Moores, Thomas, Esquire.
 Morris, Kenneth James, Esquire.
 Müller, Adolf Gustav, Esquire.
 Munro, Alan Whiteside, Esquire.
 Nicholson, David Eric, Esquire.
 Noble, Henry Winston, Esquire.
 Pizzey, Jack Charles Allan, Esquire.
 Plunkett, Thomas Flood, Esquire.
 Rasey, Thomas William, Esquire.
 Roberts, Frank Edward, Esquire.
 Roberts, Lloyd Henry Scurfield, Esquire.
 Robinson, Herbert Freemont, Esquire.
 Skinner, Alexander James, Esquire.
 Taylor, Harold Bourne, Esquire.
 Taylor, John Russell, Esquire.
 Turner, John Albert, Esquire.
 Whyte, Patrick James, Esquire.
 Wood, Leslie Arnold, Esquire.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Mr. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) (12.23 p.m.): Mr. Dickson, I move—

“That Mr. John Henry Mann do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.”

I believe he is the man for the office. I am sure, Mr. Dickson, that hon. members will agree that Mr. Mann has filled the office of Mr. Speaker with outstanding success since the time he succeeded our late lamented colleague, Samuel John Brassington. He has shown a pleasing aptitude for the office of Mr. Speaker, his rulings and decisions and general attitude in the chair have been marked by commonsense, courtesy, tact, quick thought, sound judgment, and impartiality. In addition, he has now had some years of experience as Speaker, and prior to his appointment as Speaker, he had six years' experience as Chairman of Committees, which is very good training.

Obviously, the position of Speaker is not an easy one; in fact, at times it is very difficult. In addition to the other attributes that I have mentioned, a Speaker requires to be very firm. Mr. Mann has been very firm, but at the same time he has tempered firmness with mercy. At times, of course, debates become very tense and very excited, and on such occasions the Speaker must act. Sometimes the position reminds one of these lines from the German poet, Goethe—

“Cursed devils how they murder
All attempts at keeping order.”

Those lines were not written about the conduct of parliamentarians, but I think they are appropriate to the occasion, because members do at times murder all attempts at keeping order.

Mr. Mann has shown that he can meet any situation of emergency with confidence and that he possesses the other necessary qualities. To the credit of members of this House, I should like to say that they have always readily recognised, even in the middle of an excited discussion, the need for assisting the Speaker. They realise that the Speaker cannot by himself preserve order and decorum, that he must have the whole co-operation of members of the Chamber. In passing, I say that I believe that the decorum of the Queensland Legislative Assembly is at least equal to the best in any Parliament in Australia.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LARCOMBE: The occasional resurgence and recrudescence of conflict with the Speaker is not a modern weakness or failing; it has characterised parliamentary scenes in centuries gone. On one occasion, Mr. Dickson, you lent me a book entitled “Our Parliament,” written by Strathearn Gordon. It deals with the history of Parliament, particularly the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and it confirms my view of the long-standing nature of these occasional feuds. I wish to quote from this book as to the relationship between the Speaker and members of the Assembly. I

quote from the record of Parliament recording one of these incidents, the record being made at the direction of the Speaker himself—

“16 July, 1610—Affirmed by Mr. Speaker, that Sir E. Herbert put not off his hat to him, but put out his tongue, and popped his mouth with his finger, in scorn”; “that Mr. T. T., in a loud and violent manner, and, contrary to the usage of Parliament, standing near the Speaker's Chair, cried ‘Baw’ in the Speaker's ear, to the great terror and affrightment of the Speaker and of the members of the House.”

It would take a lot of “Baws” and tongue-poking and mouth-popping to frighten the hon. member for Brisbane, and I advise the new members not to attempt anything of that kind in the Queensland Parliament.

For the reasons I have given, I am sure that hon. members will support my motion. I do not wish to appear parochial, but I recollect with pride that our Premier, Mr. Gair, is a Rockhampton native. Mr. Mann is also a native of Rockhampton and I look forward with proud expectation to his re-election as the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament.

In conclusion, I am sure that, like myself, other hon. members on such an occasion as this think of the historical background of the position of Speaker. It is one that is very illustrious but at times it has been very ignoble. In the early history of Parliament the Speaker was the King's Man. Subsequently, he became the mouthpiece of Parliament and the guardian of the House. We had the great Speakers who in the olden days faced insult, imprisonment, humiliation and even death itself in the defence of the principles of democracy, freedom and fairness. I recall reading of one instance in the reign of Charles I. when he burst into Parliament with an armed guard and searched for five men whom he wished to arrest. The King demanded certain things from the Speaker. At that time Mr. Speaker Lenthall made this famous, historic and courageous reply—

“May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here . . .”

That was a very fine attitude, a very fine spirit, a wonderful defence of respect for the Chair and its sacred associations. Therefore, today, when selecting a Speaker, we are honouring the office as well as the man.

Mr. Dickson, it is with confidence that I ask the hon. members to support my motion that Mr. John Henry Mann do take the chair as Speaker of the House.

Mr. CLARK (Fitzroy) (12.31 p.m.): I have much pleasure in seconding the nomination of Mr. John Henry Mann as Speaker of the House. For some years he served as the Chairman of Committees and both in that position and as Mr. Speaker he has always given prompt decisions marked by impartiality and fairness. He has always carried out his duties very efficiently, always

extending sincere and fair treatment to hon. members generally in making the call. I make this special note too, that his decisions have been prompt and fair. I have much pleasure in seconding the nomination made by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.33 p.m.): I have a few observations that I desire to make on this formal farce. As parliamentarians and members of this Assembly we are being asked to elect a Speaker but the fact is that he has already been elected. The members of the House, who are not members of the Labour Party have no say in the election of the Speaker; he is elected by the Labour Party Caucus. In the past we were always led to believe that the decision of the Labour Party Caucus was final and irrevocable and could only be upset by Caucus itself, but in recent weeks a new development has arisen. We find there is a body outside Parliament that has arrogated to itself the power and function to order Caucus to reconsider its decision on a very vital matter. And how do we know, as members of this august Assembly, that next week or the week after the Q.C.E. will not order the Labour Party Caucus to reconsider its decision with regard to the nomination of John Mann as Speaker of this Assembly, and that what is now a common farce will become, shall I say, a ludicrous farce.

But let that go by the way, let the Labour Party, if I may pay it the compliment of calling it a Labour Party, stew in its own juice; there is something that I have to say about the position of Mr. Speaker and his impartiality, as mentioned by the hon. member for Rockhampton when he nominated Mr. Mann for the position. We know just how much impartiality there is in this Chamber. We have seen it in the past. We have seen the bias, the prejudice and the partisanship that have been exhibited during debates when members of the Labour Party can interject and interrupt and get away with it. Now and again members of the Opposition can interject and interrupt and get away with it, but not to the same extent as members of the Labour Party. And in this connection I should say that two members on the ministerial bench are the worst and most persistent interrupters in the Chamber. Has anyone ever heard them being called to order by Mr. Speaker or by the Chairman of Committees? Has anyone ever heard them being threatened with naming? Yet here in my eyrie I have only to sneeze or to cough or even cross my legs and you will hear the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker, in a bovine roar, say, "If the hon. member for Mundingburra does not cease interrupting the proceedings of this Chamber I shall have no alternative but to name him." One of these days I might say, "Name me and be damned," and we would see what happened.

Apart from the partisanship and bias that are shown in this Chamber during the debates, let me deal with this impartiality of the Speaker in another function he exercises by virtue of his office, that is, the allocation of

accommodation at the Parliamentary Lodge and in this House. I have an example of this impartiality of a Labour Speaker. When I first entered Parliament nine years ago I asked for accommodation at the Parliamentary Lodge and was told by the Labour Speaker that there was accommodation for everyone else who asked for it—Labour, Liberal or Country Party, it did not matter—but no accommodation for me. Later, to do him full justice, the then Premier, the late F. A. Cooper, heard of it and came to me and said, "Look, Mr. Aikens, while you are a member of this Parliament you will have every concession and privilege that is extended to other members extended to you without fear or favour, and if you want a room at the Lodge I will see that you get one." I thanked him for his interest and for his gesture of justice. I told him I did not then want a room and, as far as I was concerned, what the Labour Party could do with the room.

That persecution of me has gone on and reached its zenith only yesterday. I was told nine years ago that there would be no office space in this House for me. I threatened then to see the Premier and I wish I had seen the Premier of the day. Finally I was allowed, as a gracious gesture of the then Speaker, to occupy a room downstairs in the corner of this building with George Marriott, the independent member for Bulimba. I occupied that room for nine years but when I came down yesterday I found that all my belongings, all my papers, and even the huge cupboard that was in a corner of that room had been skuldragged a few hundred yards away down the corridor and put in a converted broom cupboard. I was told that Mr. Coburn and I were to occupy this converted broom cupboard (Laughter). I was told also that it had been occupied in the past by the late Captain Wienholt, an independent member, also by Senator Maher when he was a member of this Assembly, and in the last Parliament it had been used by Messrs. Allpass and Ewan. My reply to that is this: if Country Party members are satisfied with such accommodation, it is not good enough for me. Even though Captain Wienholt, Senator Maher, and Messrs. Ewan and Allpass, who are almost millionaires the same as he, it is not good enough for the representative of the premier electorate in this State.

Let us see how impartial Mr. Speaker is in the allocation of accommodation in this House. There are, by the grace of God but very little on their own endeavours, 50 members of the Labour Party in this Parliament. Eleven of these members are Ministers and as such of course, while the House is in session for 10 hours of the week, these Ministers occupy the ministerial room just off the Chamber. The Premier has a special room at the end of the ministerial room. They have palatial suites of offices at their departmental headquarters up the street where they spend most of their time. The Speaker has a sumptuous suite of offices and a bedroom in the House. So also has the Chairman of Committees. Then the Whip of the Parliamentary Labour Party has an office adjacent

to the Assembly. That makes 14 members of the Labour Party all well equipped with palatial offices, leaving 36 rank-and-file members; and believe it or not—and I took a "Courier-Mail" reporter round with me this morning—these 36 rank-and-file members of the Labour Party in this House have been allotted no less than 12 big rooms, all sumptuously appointed.

The Leader of the Country Party has an office on the second floor of this building but 14 other members of that party are crowded into one room on the ground floor; and eight members of the Liberal Party are crowded into a still smaller room on the ground floor. Mr. Coburn and I, I suppose, should feel under an obligation to the Speaker for being relegated to a converted broom cupboard, whereas down on the ground floor of this building, opposite to where my room used to be, is a room so large that the Labour Party has held its caucus meetings in it. It is the room in which the famous raid by the Douglas Creditors was staged. That huge room, which is larger in area than the rooms occupied by the Country Party and Liberal Party combined, is occupied by seven members of the alleged Labour Party, four of whom are metropolitan members who would not get one letter a week.

I know that the Country Party is going to "cop" it and that the Liberal Party is going to "cop" it so far as accommodation is concerned. When all is said and done, 36 members of the Labour Party have been given 12 big rooms in this House for office space, and 24 rank-and-file members of the non-Labour parties have been crowded into three rooms—one fair-sized room, one small room, and one broom cupboard. Yet the hon. member for Rockhampton has the superlative nerve to talk about the impartiality of the Speaker!

I know the Liberal-Country Party will not do anything about this one-eyed vicious partisanship on the part of the Speaker in regard to accommodation—you cannot stop me from talking, Duggan; I know the Standing Orders as well as you do—because, with the exception of one or two members of the Country Party, they have not got the guts. What is more, they hope that some day they may become the Government and so be able to put back on the Labour Party what the Labour Party is putting on them. I add, in all fairness, that during the three years of the Moore Government the partiality in this Chamber was almost on a par with the partiality that exists today.

I do not intend to "cop" it. I do not care what the Liberal-Country Party does. I know that my amiable friend Arthur Coburn is not much concerned about it, but I do not intend to "cop" it—do not make any mistake about that. There is my old family motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit," meaning that no man attacks me with impunity. When I came into this Chamber I let the Government know where I stood.

It was my intention today, if I may use the vernacular, to tip the tin on the Speaker, and you know me when I am going—I am not satisfied with tipping the tin; I tip the horse, harness, cart and all. Only one thing prevented me from doing that. That was the belief that in doing so I might be playing right into the hands of another enemy of longer standing, and I should not like to do that. That being so, I take the advice that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and I were discussing a minute ago, the advice Napoleon gave to his marshals when he said, "Fight your battles on ground of your own choosing and in your own time." By all the gods that made little apples, I will win this battle, as I have won many others. The harder the fight, the better I like it.

I know that in accordance with tradition and custom, handed down from the House of Commons, when I finish speaking—and I will not keep hon. members very long—the mover and seconder of Mr. Mann for the position of Speaker will seize him by an arm each and drag him unwillingly forward to the Speaker's Chair. According to tradition and custom, that signifies that the Speaker fully realises his own unworthiness. We know now the unworthiness of this man, who up till three years ago when he became Speaker appeared to be not a bad sort of fellow and a representative of the working classes, and if I had to tip the tin, I should take as my text that wise old western saying that "You cannot feed corn to a brumby."

In conclusion, once again I throw down the gage of battle. I say to the mover and seconder of Mr. Mann for the position of Speakership, "Get him by the arm and sculldrag him along to the Chair and flop him in the Chair as unceremoniously as you can," but when he gets there I want him to realise that whatever rules are laid down by the Speaker or by the Government, whether they be Marquis of Queensberry, Rafferty, or Dog and Goanna rules, they will all suit me. I will ask for no quarter and I will give none. That has been my attitude, and now that I have been subjected to this dirty little bit of personal persecution, God help the man who visited it on me.

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) (12.47 p.m.): I find it impossible to express adequately to this House my appreciation of the honour that has been conferred upon me by being nominated again to occupy the Chair of this House. I thank Mr. Larcombe for the very kind things he has said about my occupancy of the Chair, and I also thank my seconder, Mr. Clark, for his kind remarks about my occupancy of that office. I assure all hon. members, including the hon. member for Mundingburra, that I will continue to perform that office in the same manner as I have done previously.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

There being no other nomination, Mr. Mann was called to the Chair by the Clerk, and

conducted there by the mover and seconder of the motion. Speaking from the dais, he said:—

I express my appreciation and thanks to the House that hon. members have elected me as Mr. Speaker. I can assure all hon. members, despite the ravings of the hon. member for Mundingburra, that I will endeavour to uphold dignity and decorum and endeavour to maintain the prestige of Parliament.

Honourable Members: Hear hear!

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (12.49 p.m.) Mr. Speaker, I should like as Acting Leader of the House to tender my congratulations to you on your re-election to the high and important office of Speaker. I am sure that the experience you have gained will be of very great help to you in the discharge of your onerous duties and will enable you to more effectively discharge your responsibilities to the House as a whole. You have had quite a long experience as a parliamentarian and you have been well trained in this Assembly in the duties of Chairman of Committees and in more recent times in the duties of Mr. Speaker. I think that occasionally we should pause for a while and acknowledge the value of the very high office of Mr. Speaker in this Assembly and the important part it plays and the fact that it is symbolical of the fight for freedom. Whilst we are able to install people like yourself as Mr. Speaker in this Assembly we know that the people have a free choice to elect their representatives to Parliament and we know that the Parliament itself will conform to the rules and regulations laid down for Parliament. I congratulate you on your re-election and I wish you a happy and successful term of office.

Honourable Members: Hear hear!

Mr. DUGGAN: I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are a big man physically and you have both the attributes of temperament and qualification to enable you to deal with any eventuality that may arise and, whilst there is an obligation on you to discharge with fairness and impartiality the dignity, decorum and responsibility of your office there is also an obligation on each of us to help you in your difficult task. We have often read and heard of comments decrying parliamentary institutions and in particular the conduct of a particular Session of Parliament or the composition of particular Governments and whether they carry out the mandates they receive from the people. I do not wish to lay myself open to a charge of engaging on an occasion such as this, which is really a congratulatory one, in party political controversial matters, but even in this morning's paper we read of an attack upon the system of government in this State dealing with the consideration of Parliamentary Bills and the conduct of the House. I want to say as one who has spent some little time in an examination of the conduct of Houses of Parliament in Australia and overseas, that I do not think the Queensland

Parliament, despite the fact that we have a unicameral system of government in this State, is inferior to any other Parliament in the way it deals with its business, and in the dignity and decorum with which it transacts it, and the opportunities afforded to members of the House and the general public to discuss these matters either in the Assembly or with their elected representatives in the Assembly or by approaches to Ministers of the Crown and by representations to responsible departmental officers. Indeed, in the life of the last Parliament, extending over some three years, the gag was applied on only three occasions. I do not make this comparison for party purposes, but I want to say that in the Federal House where there is a bicameral system of government and where there is more opportunity to have legislation carefully reviewed, in the last 18 months in which the Commonwealth Parliament met the gag was applied on no fewer than 133 occasions. So I do not think we have cause to be ashamed of the way we have conducted our business in this House.

I want to say that the complexities of modern life and the times in which we live throw increasing responsibilities upon parliamentarians and upon the parliamentary institution. The tremendous improvement in communications makes the impact of important decisions felt in remote corners of the world soon after they occur. There are many national and international problems wrapped up in modern government; there is an increasing intervention by Governments in the social life and habits of the people and it is this inexorable development of modern civilisation that obliges Governments to intervene in economic affairs, because for example we might need to stockpile strategic materials and enter into responsible arrangements with other Governments. So governmental decisions are necessary to an increasing extent. Therefore, Parliament has a great responsibility to discharge and I feel sure that the typical member of Parliament is conscious of his responsibilities to his constituents.

The attack that we have heard on you this morning is an indication of what I have said. What more freedom could be given than was given this morning in the case of your own election to the high office of Speaker? It was not a question of liberty, but of a licence to attack. Whatever feelings the hon. member for Mundingburra may have about the allocation of accommodation here, he is of course at liberty to make known his demands to you.

But I remember an occasion when the Leader of the Opposition said that you were a very fine physical specimen and that some of the raiment that is sometimes worn by Speakers in some other Parliaments would fit you excellently. Whether that is so or not, you have a sense of humour and you have not been unmindful of the crusading campaign of the hon. member for Mundingburra, who was going to cleanse the country of all this filth, all this unfairness, and all this discrimination, and perhaps in doing what you did there may have been in the back of

your mind a feeling that it would not be out of atmosphere that a member who wanted to participate in this cleansing campaign should be allotted a place where brooms at one time were kept. (Laughter.)

I have very much pleasure in offering you my own felicitations and those of all members on this side of the House, for I know that the hon. member for Coorparoo will wish to join me in congratulating you. Indeed, on behalf of all members of this House, I hope that your term will be very fruitful and that during the next three years we shall see peace established in the democracies of the world, an improvement in the standard of living, and an increase in primary and secondary production, so that we shall be able to say that we have been participants in the fruits of a very prolific period. I offer you, Mr. Speaker, my sincere felicitations on your election to your high office.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (12.58 p.m.): On behalf of members on this side of the House, I should like to extend to you, Mr. Speaker, my congratulations on your appointment without contest and by the will of the entire House. That is how the office of Speaker should always be filled, and it is a happy thing that it has been so filled on this occasion.

When you took over the duties of Speaker some 2½ years ago, you quickly showed this House that you possessed many of the qualities necessary to make you a good occupant of that office. Since then, the experience you have gained and the close study you have made of the position make us feel that you will be a very good Speaker indeed and we look forward to sitting under your presidency. You have shown that you have the bearing and the voice for the position, and above all, you have the quality of decision. I should say that the very first quality in a Speaker is the ability to make speedy decisions. I should infinitely prefer to sit under a Speaker who made an occasional error quickly than to have to endure the vacillation of a Speaker who took a long time to make up his mind, even if he was never wrong. In order to have strict control, speedy decision from the Chair is a prime necessity, and you have shown repeatedly that you possess that quality. I trust that we shall have the benefit of similar speedy decisions in the future.

It is noteworthy that, as the retiring Speaker, you did not have to face an election. It is also noteworthy that looking back over the period since you have been Speaker, your participation in the debates in this House has been signally rare. Those two things have helped in the acceptance of the person for this high office, and have added to the probability that he will be able to lift himself free of the turmoil of party influence and party interest and bring to bear on the discharge of his duties the impartiality that is the prerequisite of the Speaker.

On this occasion it is probable that your duties will be added to by those to which you will have to attend in playing the part of host during the Royal visit.

Mr. Aikens: They are going to knight him for that; Sir Johnno Mann, K.C.M.G.!

Mr. HILEY: All I can say to that interjection is that if such an offer was made it would be an acknowledgment of the office first and the man second. In my view, the making of such an offer would be an honour to this institution of Parliament, and what you did in response to it would be a matter entirely for your own free choice and decision.

The paranoic display of purely personal exhibitionism that came from the lips of the hon. member for Mundingburra is not a correct interpretation of the proceedings in this House. We should jealously guard the institution of Parliament, recognising that it should be our constant concern to see that everything is done on a high plane, whether it relates to fairness in the allocation of rooms in this building—which in due course will be dealt with by the appropriate committee of this House—or to anything else. The vilifying tongue of the hon. member for Mundingburra, which he used not without considerable ability in order to engage in purely personal exhibitionism, is one of the things that should command the attention of hon. members who have a great respect for the institution of Parliament.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members on this side of the House pledge their support to you in carrying out your parliamentary duties, realising that it is only by maintaining order and dignity in such an institution that Parliament can survive.

I repeat my own congratulations and those of hon. members on this side.

PRESENTATION OF MR. SPEAKER.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I have to inform hon. members that His Excellency the Governor will receive the House for the purpose of presenting Mr. Speaker to His Excellency at Government House this afternoon at 2.30 o'clock.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that at 2.15 p.m. today I shall leave for Government House, there to present myself to His Excellency the Governor as the member chosen to fill the high and honourable office of Speaker, and I invite such hon. members as care to do so to accompany me.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): 1 move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11.57 a.m. tomorrow.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.3 p.m.