

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1983

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Legislative Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF NOVEMBER, IN THE THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1983

TUESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1983

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 10 November 1983, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 11 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk 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 Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, and the Honourable Russell James Hinze, Commissioners in order to the opening and holding of this session of Parliament.

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

THE SENIOR COMMISSIONER (Honourable J. Bjelke-Petersen—Barambah) said: Honourable 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 Premier thereupon produced a Commission under the public seal of the State empowering him, the Honourable Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, the Honourable William Angus Manson Gunn, and the Honourable Russell James Hinze, or any one or more 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—

Albert—Ivan James Gibbs
 Archerfield—Kevin Joseph Hooper
 Ashgrove—Thomas Robert Veivers
 Aspley—Brian John Cahill
 Auburn—Neville John Harper
 Balonne—Donald McConnell Neal
 Barambah—Johannes Bjelke-Petersen
 Barron River—Martin James Tenni
 Brisbane Central—Brian John Davis
 Bulimba—Ronald Thomas McLean
 Bundaberg—Clement Bernard Campbell
 Burdekin—Mark David Stoneman
 Burnett—Claude Alfred Wharton
 Caboolture—Lyell Edward Newton
 Cairns—Keith Ernest De Lacy
 Callide—Lindsay Earle Hartwig
 Carnarvon—Peter Richard McKechnie
 Chatsworth—Terence Michael Mackenroth
 Condamine—Brian George Littleproud
 Cook—Robert William Scott
 Cooroora—Gordon Leslie Simpson
 Cunningham—Jannion Anthony Elliott
 Everton—Glen Richard Milliner
 Fassifern—Kevin Rowson Lingard
 Flinders—Robert Carl Katter
 Greenslopes—Leisha Teresa Harvey
 Gregory—William Hamline Glasson
 Gympie—Leonard William Stephan
 Hinchinbrook—Edward Charles Row
 Ipswich—David John Hamill
 Ipswich West—David Francis Underwood
 Isis—Lionel William Powell
 Ithaca—Colin John Miller
 Kurilpa—Anne Marie Warner
 Landsborough—Michael John Ahern
 Lockyer—Andrew Anthony FitzGerald
 Lytton—Thomas James Burns
 Mackay—Edmund Denis Casey
 Mansfield—William Bernard Kaus
 Maryborough—Gilbert Alison
 Merthyr—Donald Frederick Lane
 Mirani—James Henry Randell
 Mount Coot-tha—William Daniel Lickiss
 Mount Gravatt—Ian Thomas Henderson
 Mount Isa—William Norris James Price
 Mourilyan—Andrew George Eaton
 Mulgrave—Max Richard Menzel
 Murrumba—Raymond Charles Kruger
 Nudgee—Kenneth Hamilton Vaughan
 Nundah—William Edward Knox
 Peak Downs—Vincent Patrick Lester

Pine Rivers—Yvonne Ann Chapman
 Port Curtis—William George Prest
 Redcliffe—Terence Anthony White
 Redlands—John Philip Goleby
 Rockhampton—Keith Webb Wright
 Rockhampton North—Leslie John Yewdale
 Roma—Theo Russell Cooper
 Salisbury—Wayne Keith Goss
 Sandgate—Neville George Warburton
 Sherwood—John Angus Mackenzie Innes
 Somerset—William Angus Manson Gunn
 South Brisbane—Demetrios Fouras
 South Coast—Russell James Hinze
 Southport—Douglas Bernard Jennings
 Stafford—Denis Joseph Murphy
 Surfers Paradise—Robert Edward Borbidge
 Toowong—Earle Wilfred Bailey
 Toowoomba North—Alexander Carpendale McPhie
 Toowoomba South—John Herbert Warner
 Townsville—Kenneth Victor McElligott
 Townsville South—Alexander McLachlan Wilson
 Townsville West—Geoffrey Norman Smith
 Warrego—Neil John Turner
 Warwick—Desmond James Booth
 Wavell—Brian Douglas Austin
 Whitsunday—Geoffrey Hugh Muntz
 Windsor—Patrick Comben
 Wolston—Robert James Gibbs
 Woodridge—William Theodore D'Arcy
 Wynnum—Eric Frank Shaw
 Yeronga—Norman Edward Lee

MEMBERS SWORN

The Commissioners, who with other members of the Ministry had been sworn in before His Excellency the Governor on 17 November 1983 and subscribed the roll, then administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance to the following other members, who thereupon also subscribed the roll—

Alison, Gilbert, Esquire
 Bailey, Earle Wilfred, Esquire
 Booth, Desmond James, Esquire
 Borbidge, Robert Edward, Esquire
 Burns, Thomas James, Esquire
 Cahill, Brian John, Esquire
 Campbell, Clement Bernard, Esquire
 Casey, Edmund Denis, Esquire
 Chapman, Mrs Yvonne Ann
 Comben, Patrick, Esquire
 Cooper, Theo Russell, Esquire
 D'Arcy, William Theodore, Esquire
 Davis, Brian John, Esquire
 De Lacy, Keith Ernest, Esquire
 Eaton, Andrew George, Esquire
 Elliott, Jannion Anthony, Esquire
 FitzGerald, Andrew Anthony, Esquire
 Fouras, Demetrios, Esquire
 Gibbs, Robert James, Esquire
 Goss, Wayne Keith, Esquire
 Hamill, David John, Esquire
 Harvey, Mrs Leisha Teresa
 Hartwig, Lindsay Earle, Esquire

Henderson, Ian Thomas, Esquire
 Hooper, Kevin Joseph, Esquire
 Innes, John Angus Mackenzie, Esquire
 Jennings, Douglas Bernard, Esquire
 Kaus, William Bernard, Esquire
 Knox, Sir William Edward, The Honourable
 Kruger, Raymond Charles, Esquire
 Lee, Norman Edward, The Honourable
 Lickiss, William Daniel, The Honourable
 Lingard, Kevin Rowson, Esquire
 Littleproud, Brian George, Esquire
 Mackenroth, Terence Michael, Esquire
 McElligott, Kenneth Victor, Esquire
 McLean, Ronald Thomas, Esquire
 McPhie, Alexander Carpendale, Esquire
 Menzel, Max Richard, Esquire
 Miller, Colin John, Esquire
 Milliner, Glen Richard, Esquire
 Murphy, Denis Joseph, Esquire
 Neal, Donald McConnell, Esquire
 Newton, Lyell Edward, Esquire
 Powell, Lionel William, The Honourable
 Prest, William George, Esquire
 Price, William Norris James, Esquire
 Randell, James Henry, Esquire
 Row, Edward Charles, Esquire
 Scott, Robert William, Esquire
 Shaw, Eric Frank, Esquire
 Simpson, Gordon Leslie, Esquire
 Smith, Geoffrey Norman, Esquire
 Stephan, Leonard William, Esquire
 Stoneman, Mark David, Esquire
 Underwood, David Francis, Esquire
 Vaughan, Kenneth Hamilton, Esquire
 Veivers, Thomas Robert, Esquire
 Warburton, Neville George, Esquire
 Warner, Mrs Anne Marie
 Warner, John Herbert, Esquire
 White, Terence Anthony, Esquire
 Wilson, Alexander McLachlan, Esquire
 Wright, Keith Webb, Esquire
 Yewdale, Leslie John, Esquire

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (11.39 a.m.): I move—

“That Mr John Herbert Warner do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

As members are aware, the speakership of this House is a position of very great importance. I believe that the member for Toowoomba South, who has represented that electorate in the Queensland Legislative Assembly since December 1974, has all the qualities needed to fill this office.

He has a wide knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedures. A member of the Select Committee of Privileges since 1975, he has been that committee's chairman for the past four years. During the years he has served on that important committee and, indeed, throughout the years he has been a member of the Legislative Assembly, he has demonstrated his high regard for the institution of Parliament and all it stands for.

I am in no doubt that the member for Toowoomba South will discharge the duties and responsibilities of the office with distinction, and it was with great pleasure that I moved that he take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister Assisting the Treasurer) (11.40 a.m.): It is a great pleasure for me to second the motion moved by the Premier nominating the honourable member for Toowoomba South to fill the position of Speaker of this Parliament.

The role of the Speaker is vitally important because the success and standing of this Parliament, to a large degree, hang on the performance and authority of the Speaker. In this regard, I believe that Queensland has been well served by a succession of Speakers who all sought to uphold the highest standards and traditions of the Westminster system.

I have no doubt that John Warner will prove to be more than capable of carrying out the role of Speaker. Since being elected in 1974, he has had extensive parliamentary experience on a wide range of parliamentary committees. He has been a member of the Select Committee on Privileges since 1975, and has chaired that committee since 1979. Mr Warner served in the Royal Australian Air Force as an officer pilot during World War II.

In seconding the nomination of Mr Warner, I would like also to pay a tribute to the former Speaker, Mr Sel Muller, for the service he gave in this position. Most members of the House would agree that the Speakership is not an easy role to fulfil. It demands a sound knowledge of parliamentary procedures, a sense of fairness and balance, and the ability to exert effective control over the running of Parliament.

All that any Parliament can ask of its Speaker is that he carry out his duties to the best of his ability, and Queensland has been fortunate in having Speakers who have fulfilled the demands of the position with great success.

In closing, I commend to honourable members the nomination of Mr John Warner as Speaker, and I urge them to give him full support.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (11.42 a.m.): I move—

“That Mr Colin John Miller do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

In speaking to that motion, I first pay a compliment to the former member for Fassifern (Mr Muller) for the very distinguished service that he rendered as Speaker of this House. He was a very fine man personally, and he contributed greatly to advancing the cause of parliamentary democracy. Because he resigned subsequent to the House adjourning and prior to the election, we have not had an opportunity to pay a tribute to Mr Muller.

As the Premier said, the office of Speaker is one of great responsibility. It is an honourable office and one that is supported by every member in this Chamber. I regret to say that the question of who occupies that office is still a matter of party politics. Therefore, very often the person elected does not have the ambition to hold the office, nor does he necessarily have the best qualifications. Nevertheless, I can say from experience that, in spite of those inhibitions in the system, the people who have occupied the office during my time as a member of Parliament have shown considerable ability.

I am delighted to see sitting in the precincts of the Chamber a former Speaker of this Assembly, the Honourable Sir David Nicholson. He was one of those people who, during the period that he held that office, contributed greatly towards maintaining the dignity of this Assembly. In spite of the restrictions that we in this Chamber have placed on the office of Speaker, all of the gentlemen who have held that office whilst I have been a member, have handled the job extremely well.

Of course, 300 years ago in the House of Commons, the Speaker was the spokesman for the monarch. Since that time he has been the spokesman for the Parliament. Because the Speaker is the spokesman not only to the monarch but also to the public at large, he has great authority and responsibility. I regret to say that very often in recent years in Australia some people have seen fit to denigrate the position of Speaker and not give it proper recognition.

The Speaker is the manager of the Parliament in session and he organises the day-to-day arrangements of Parliament House. The position of Speaker involves more than just holding office and wearing a wig on occasions. It is a pity that there is not a Department of the Legislature that more clearly defines the role of the Speaker in the management of Parliament House and its environs.

The members who understand the role of the Speaker are aware of the tremendous responsibilities that he has each day in managing the affairs of this Parliament. Members must be accommodated; their wishes must be met. The Speaker must see that the behind-the-scenes functions of the Parliament run smoothly. That has been done very effectively in the past, and I am sure that it will be done in the future.

Perhaps more than anything else, the Speaker's role is to maintain the dignity of Parliament, both by his presence here and by his bearing in other places. That burden rests heavily on the shoulders of the person chosen to be Speaker.

Without being disrespectful to any other person in this Chamber, I should say that Mr Miller has demonstrated that he is eminently qualified to occupy the position of Speaker. He has been a member of this legislature since May 1966. He has held the positions of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees since 5 March 1981. All who have served in this place have come to admire his forthrightness, his decisiveness, his knowledge of the Standing Orders, and the thoroughness with which he has prepared himself for events that have occurred when he has been Chairman of Committees or Acting Speaker. Not only that; he has also taken advantage of the opportunity to be educated in the offices of Speaker and Chairman of Committees. He has attended courses designed for that purpose in the United Kingdom. He made a special visit to Canada to investigate the creation of committees in Parliament and he presented a report to this Parliament on his findings. As the Parliamentary Handbook will reveal, Mr Miller has spent most of his parliamentary life on the various committees of this Parliament, and he has served on them with great distinction.

If one reads "Hansard", one sees that he has made rulings on over 60 occasions in both the House and in Committee. Many of those rulings were on delicate matters that needed instant decisions. He made those decisions and they were supported by members on both sides of the House. I point that out because his rulings have stood the test of time and some of them have set precedents for the legislature.

When occupying the position as Chairman of Committees or Acting Speaker, Mr Miller has contributed much to the standing of the Parliament and to its procedures. He is very personable, he likes company, he enjoys being with his friends, and he is well respected in the community. He is the type of person one would be happy to invite home. There may be some members in this House—for example, the honourable member for Archerfield—about whom one might have some doubts in that respect. Of course, the honourable member for Archerfield has improved out of sight since he has been associating with Rhodes Scholars.

Mr Miller is highly regarded in his electorate and the wider community. He has adequately represented the community in the Parliament on many occasions. He has done so with great distinction. He is one of only two members remaining in the House who served in the AIF, and he has a distinguished record of war service. He has been involved in numerous community affairs in his own electorate and in the State.

I have very much pleasure indeed in nominating Mr Miller. I do not think that we could ever hope to get a more experienced and more competent person to be considered for appointment as Speaker.

Hon. W. D. LICKISS (Mt Coot-tha) (11.50 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Nundah, and have much pleasure in doing so. I also pay tribute to the former Speaker of this House, Selwyn Muller, who retired prior to the election.

The 82 members gathered in this Chamber today representing the people of Queensland have a duty and a responsibility to those people and to this Parliament to ensure that one of our number who is to be elected to the very high office of Speaker has demonstrated by experience and action that he can uphold that high office with dignity, honour and capacity.

The honourable member for Ithaca, Mr C. J. Miller, has been a member of this Assembly since May 1966, a period of 17 years. He is one of the two members still serving in this Parliament who has held the appointment of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament. That appointment in itself has shown the capacity of Mr Miller to exercise the privileges and the duties attaching to that high office.

The honourable member for Ithaca was appointed to the panel of Temporary Chairmen in March 1975. He was appointed Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker early in 1981, and he retains that position until the members of this Parliament decide otherwise. Since the resignation of the former Speaker (Mr Selwyn Muller), the member for Ithaca has fulfilled the role of Acting Speaker of the Queensland Parliament. I am sure that all honourable members will agree with me when I state that Mr Miller has not only acquitted himself with dignity but also preserved, and, indeed, encouraged, a sense of decorum while he has presided over the Committee of the House, as Chairman of Committees, or over the whole House as Acting Speaker or Deputy Speaker.

Over the years, some members seem to have had a flair or a leaning towards a particular aspect of political life. I believe that the member for Ithaca has shown a distinct flair and respect for the institution of Parliament. I am sure that honourable members on both sides of the House would agree that he has a feeling for the institution of Parliament, that he has clearly demonstrated on numerous occasions when feelings have run a little high, as they are apt to do in this Chamber, that he commands the respect of the members and attends without fear or favour to matters requiring his attention. That is a very important element in the functioning of any Parliament that operates under the Westminster system.

As the only other member of this Parliament who has held the appointment of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker and acted as Speaker on a number of occasions, I merely point out that presiding over the House does not end the responsibility of the Speaker. The position requires, firstly, a wide experience of parliamentary matters, procedures and practices. Mr Miller has gone out of his way to better equip himself in that aspect of our parliamentary life. Secondly, it requires common sense and impartiality, something that usually can be built up only through experience.

Mr Miller is the member most experienced in the running of this House, having held the appointment of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker and having been on the panel of Temporary Chairmen for a number of years. The position requires an administrative capacity and, as I have mentioned, a feeling for the institution of Parliament. The holder of the position of Speaker requires an ability to handle ceremonial occasions. The Speaker must convey a resolution of the House to outside authority. He is required to issue writs for by-elections, and so on.

In seconding the motion moved by the member for Nundah, I state my belief that the honourable member for Ithaca has the temperament, the experience and the feeling for this place to be a very fine Speaker. He has already demonstrated his ability and his qualities for the position and has never been found wanting. He has been tried and proven, and it is with great pleasure that I second the motion.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition) (11.56 a.m.): In the past it has been almost traditional for the Opposition to bring forward to the Assembly its own nominee for the high and honourable position of Speaker. Following the 1980 election, we nominated the then member for Cairns, Ray Jones. However, those who were here in 1972 will recall that the Opposition did not follow that tradition. Instead, we supported a nomination that came from the Government ranks in the person of Mr Lonergan, the then member for Flinders, who was duly elected.

We have carefully considered our role as an Opposition and intend on this occasion also to forgo our right to nominate a candidate. Instead, it is our intention to support the member for Ithaca. I have listened carefully to the comments made by—and I take this opportunity to say it—the leader of the Liberal Party in this House, although he is not recognised as such. In Mr Miller we have a man who is well experienced in the role of Speaker. In the past he has shown that essence of impartiality that is required, and he is highly competent. All honourable members realise that it is not an easy task to be Speaker. I, too, pay a tribute to the performance of Sel Muller. There were times when I criticised him as Speaker; but his task was difficult and onerous, and he performed exceptionally well.

Speakership of this House is not an easy job. The person who carries out that role must have experience. He or she must understand Standing Orders. I suggest that nothing is more embarrassing than having a Speaker who does not understand the Rules of the House, who blunders and almost has to be taken to task by the Clerk of the Parliament. That has occurred in the past because not all Speakers have had the competency that is desirable.

The Opposition believes that Mr Miller, because of his experience, because of his service as Acting Speaker, Deputy Speaker and also Chairman of Committees, would perform the task well. Mr Miller has served on various committees of the Parliament. We now have a clear division between Government and Opposition—between the National Party and the Labor Party—so that there is some merit in having the chairman of the Library Committee, the Printing Committee or other parliamentary committees come from the other party, the Liberal Party. We would then have three Nationals and three Labor members, with the chairman being a Liberal, an independent and impartial, member.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: You're hopeful.

Mr WRIGHT: I hear the Premier saying that I am hopeful. I ask him to cast his memory back to 1972, when the numbers in this Chamber were similar to the present numbers. In those days the Opposition had three representatives on each parliamentary committee. We will again be seeking similar representation on all committees.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: I do believe in fairness, and I believe that there is a role for a Government and for an Opposition. I hope that, despite the excesses we have seen exhibited in the past by this Government, we will have the balance in representation that is necessary within the Parliament. Still, I appreciate that one must hope.

We need in the chair of this House a person who has experience on committees of the Parliament. In the past, many of those committees have not worked effectively. I cannot recall the last time the Printing Committee met. Perhaps someone can tell me.

Mr Milliner: Twice in six years.

Mr WRIGHT: Twice in six years! The Refreshment Rooms Committee rarely meets, although it has been effective in ensuring that members have at least reasonable fare. The Select Committee of Privileges meets when required, but again a review is needed. I suggest that all honourable members would agree that the job of revamping and restructuring the Standing Orders of this Parliament has only just begun. A competent person who understands the necessities of this Parliament and the expectations and demands of members is needed as Speaker.

That is also the case with other committees. The Parliamentary Buildings Committee, whilst it commenced well, had minimal influence on the establishment of the annexe. Again I believe there is a need for competent chairmanship, and that will be brought about by a person such as the member for Ithaca (Mr Miller).

Not only do the existing committees need to be investigated, but, there is also the need for revamping the present committee structure of the Parliament. Prior to the election many comments were made during debate in this Assembly on the need for a parliamentary public accounts committee. Prior to the the election the Premier said that the establishment of such a committee would be a waste of money, that it would mean nothing other than perks for members of Parliament. I have since been told that his Government has been looking at the New South Wales system and seeking advice from that Government. For a long time notices of motion have been on the Business Paper putting forward the desirability of a parliamentary public accounts committee. Such a committee would ensure scrutiny of the expenditure of the Government. Records show that when New South Wales set up a public accounts committee in excess of \$100m was saved. Queensland has that need.

A public works committee comprising members of all parties of the Parliament is needed to scrutinise and review the tendering procedures and contract arrangements for the various projects of the Government.

Mr Lane: Why don't you migrate?

Mr WRIGHT: The member for Merthyr can be left to a later date. I am sure that all members will have an opportunity to express some comments about him.

Mr Lane: You're tipping a bucket.

Mr WRIGHT: Unlike the honourable member, I am not.

As I have said, a different structure of committees is needed, to include committees such as a public accounts committee, a public works committee and a statutory authorities public review committee. For a long time a notice of motion for the establishment of a statutory authorities review committee appeared on the Business Paper, but the matter was never brought on for debate. The Government's own figures reveal that 687 quangos (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) are operating in this State. Last financial year they spent more than \$3.69 billion, were managed by 3 677 appointed or elected members and had a staff of 50 983, yet there is no control over them. This Parliament does not know what they do. It is no wonder that the previous Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern) publicly got into so much trouble over the Peanut Marketing Board and the dairy industry. The Parliament needs to ensure that there is control and that it carries out its scrutinising and surveillance role of those authorities and their non-elected personnel. Members should realise and understand that this is the only Parliament that does not have such a committee system. Every other Parliament in Australia has a public accounts committee. Victoria has had one since before the turn of the century and the Commonwealth Parliament since 1913. Instead of costing money, such a committee would save money.

Because the image and the reputation of Parliament are at an all-time low, there is a need to review the role of Parliament. It is possibly because of the outbursts of the member for Merthyr that people have such a low opinion of the Parliament and, therefore, of politicians. I realise that people have a limited knowledge of the role of parliamentarians. Too often people in the community think that we go to Canberra and that a member somehow is automatically in the Government. They do not understand the role of the Opposition. As individual, private members of Parliament we have a responsibility to raise the image and standing of this Assembly and I suggest we might do that if we start thinking of what we say in this Assembly and if, while we make use of its privilege, we do not abuse that privilege.

For instance, every time a person is maligned or abused in this Assembly that person should have some right of redress. Consideration should be given to allowing an aggrieved person to gain that redress by forwarding a letter or some other type of correspondence to the Speaker. If that could happen I believe that the people of Queensland would feel that justice was prevailing. On many occasions members of the public have been maligned, criticised or abused by members on both sides of the Chamber, yet they have had limited redress. It ought to be a basic right of individual Queenslanders to be able to write to the Speaker of this House and express his or her side of the issue, and to have that letter of substance read in the Assembly and recorded in "Hansard" so that his or her voice is heard.

There has to be a responsibility on members of Parliament to ensure that the system works better than it does now, because this is not the Government's House; it is not the National Party's House; it is not the Opposition's House. It is surely the House of the people of Queensland. It is not supposed to be a House of convenience. It is supposed to function in a proper and democratic way. It is unfortunate that it has been downgraded and politicised, and the blame for that must surely be placed squarely at the feet of this Government.

One has only to look at the way the sittings have been organised. Sitting times have been a farce. This Parliament sat for 14 days and 10 minutes since 1 December 1982. There is a need for more frequent and regular sittings. Even the hours of sittings need to be reviewed. In the 15 years that I have been here I have often wondered why it is that we must commence at 11 o'clock in the morning. Why can we not start at 10 a.m.? Why can we not proceed until 7 p.m. instead of 6 p.m.?

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: Haven't you got any work to do in the office?

Mr WRIGHT: Yes, we have plenty of work to do at the office, but we must consider the responsibilities of members of Parliament to be present in this Assembly. If the sitting hours were 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., far more would be achieved.

The Parliament should work first and foremost as a legislature. It should not be a legislative sausage-machine, as we have seen in the past, when six or seven Bills have been rushed through in one night and members have not had the opportunity to consider the relevant issues and the people affected by the legislation have made no input. How many times have Ministers had to amend rushed legislation because a grave drafting error has been made?

I acknowledge the role of members of Parliament electorally. I acknowledge that we have a heavy and onerous task placed upon us to care for our electorates. I acknowledge the work that we must do as community leaders and representatives. I am also aware of the responsibilities we have from a party point of view. But we also have a legislative responsibility, and people expect us to carry out that role. If the sitting times were changed perhaps the duration of certain debates could be altered. The Adjournment debate has become something of a farce. There have been occasions when five Opposition members and only one Government member have spoken in that debate. Why? Because no-one else has been prepared to wait till 2 a.m. to bring forward a matter of importance.

There is a need for serious thought to be given to the introduction of a grievance debate. The present debate on Matters of Public Interest needs to be extended to at least two hours. Of the 82 members of this Parliament 18 are Ministers. The remaining 64 members ought to be able to participate in that debate. A member would get a chance to speak only once every 11 weeks. For instance, a member might get a chance to raise a matter of importance to himself and his constituents only once or twice a year, and surely that is not good enough.

Mr Lester: What about question-time?

Mr WRIGHT: I had intended to deal with question-time because members were fooled and tricked by the recent amendments to the Standing Orders. We believed that this Parliament would work more effectively following those changes, but instead of being able to ask three questions we now can ask only two. There is now the ridiculous situation where, even if a member does place a question on notice, a Minister is bound to read out the reply, and that is time-consuming and a waste of time. It is certainly not in keeping with the practice in other Parliaments.

But it is not only question-time and the duration of debates that must be considered. The right of members of Parliament as private members—as Government back-benchers or Opposition members—to raise issues in this Assembly, particularly by way of a private member's Bill, must also be considered. Those members who have studied the Standing Orders would know that there is very little opportunity to bring forward any matter in an effective manner by way of a private member's Bill. The enormous cost acts as a great deterrent.

Notices of motion are ignored by the Government irrespective of who brings them forward. Some 16 matters of importance to members of Parliament were on the Business Paper for many months—some since 5 August 1982. One related to establishing a select committee for equal opportunity for women in Queensland. It was not debated. Another related to the future of Moreton Bay and its islands, including North Stradbroke Island. Yet another related to an all-party committee to scrutinise and report to Parliament on Bills that interfere with personal rights and liberties. Surely those are issues that affect the people of Queensland but, again, we heard nothing from the Government and had no opportunity to debate them. Another matter related to a move for a proper inquiry by an all-party committee of this House into a fair redistribution of electoral boundaries.

Mr Booth: We will take care of that.

Mr WRIGHT: We know what the Government intends to do.

Another matter dealt with a proposal for a public register of foreign ownership of land in Queensland. Yet another matter concerned expenses incurred by Ministers. No information was given until, on the very day that Parliament rose in December, 1982, the information was tabled. In 1983, before Parliament was even told about it, the Premier released the information to try to score off his political opponents in the Liberal Party.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen: When are you going to pay the \$3,000 that you owe the Government?

Mr WRIGHT: I will talk to the Premier about that later on.

The Premier has a responsibility, as the Leader of the Government, to make Parliament work. He is supposed to be the heavy in this place. He is the man who makes all the decisions.

Let us do something to improve the Parliament because it is the people's Parliament, not the Joh Bjelke-Petersen Parliament, the Russ Hinze Parliament or the Bill Gunn Parliament. It is the people's Parliament and it is about time that members in the Government ranks realised that fact.

The Government has made a farce of the system. It has given the people of Queensland little opportunity to present their views or express their opinions. When petitions are presented the Government does not even acknowledge them and Ministers take no action on them. There is simply no ministerial or Government response. It is almost a total waste of time for the thousands of Queenslanders to go through the exercise of signing a petition and having it presented to Parliament. It should be remembered that it is an age-old tradition that people have the right in a democracy to petition the Parliament to bring forward their views. But in Queensland, that is a joke! Nothing is done about petitions. The time has come for all of us to review our roles as members of Parliament and to ensure that the individual members of Parliament, the Parliament itself, the Executive and the Ministers must be accountable.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen interjected.

Mr WRIGHT: Let the Premier support me on this matter; let him do something about it.

All we have seen are the excesses of this Government. Even when the mace was presented to this Chamber—and it is one of the traditions of the Westminster system—instead of putting, “Parliament of Queensland” on it, it was decided to put, “Government of Queensland” on it.

The Premier closed Parliament at his whim on 9 August to allow a party brawl to take place. He dissolved Parliament to remove matters of importance from the Business Paper. He gagged debate and stopped Parliament from sitting. His record is abysmal.

Accountability must start with each of us. Maybe this is the time for new members to realise that they are accountable to their electorates not just once every three years but on every occasion that they sit in this Parliament.

The Opposition advocates the establishment of a pecuniary interest register. We should ensure that there is no political patronage and that political propriety prevails in this place. Labor is committed to these initiatives, and Labor members constantly ask why members of the National Party are not. Why does not the Premier want some type of register of pecuniary interests? Why cannot the people be told what interests the Ministers have? Why cannot they be told exactly what Ministers own before they make important ministerial decisions?

Members of Parliament must review their accountability. They must rethink the system. We can learn from other Parliaments. I should hate to see a return of the Upper House in Queensland but without it Parliament needs a legislative committee system that will allow broad non-party political issues to be considered before they come to this Assembly. The community must have some input. Instead of that, the Government introduces legislation and talks to the people afterwards. The people who are affected by the legislation should have a chance to consider proposals. That does not happen in Queensland.

Many subjects, such as small business and a register of foreign ownership of land, are debated here on which members of Parliament would have common agreement except for the Premier. There ought to be informed debate. Matters should be thoroughly investigated before they become law. There ought to be community input, and that can take place only if we rethink the way in which the Parliament works.

I also acknowledge the supremacy and authority of this Parliament. Honourable members have a responsibility to report on the issues before the Parliament, and that responsibility cannot be cast aside. They have a responsibility to report on the actions and decisions taken by the Parliament on reports on ministerial expenses or quangos; but again that does not happen.

There also has to be control over the bureaucracy, and the exercising of that control is our task as a Parliament. No doubt, because of the difficulties of government today, we have a responsibility to delegate authority. Myriad decisions have to be made. Again, there must be some type of surveillance and control over those people who are given that delegated power.

If anything is needed urgently by way of legislation, it is surely a public bodies Act. Such an Act is being considered by other Parliaments. It would put an end to the unnecessary autonomy of so many quasi-public bodies within this State. I suggest that there is a grave need to restore the supremacy, authority and autonomy of Parliament.

Parliament is only as good as the rules under which it works and, regrettably, the rules in this Parliament have been distorted and misinterpreted for too long. A brand new set of rules is needed in Queensland and we, as individual members of Parliament, have the opportunity to participate in the drafting of those rules. The administration of any democratic Government, particularly in this State, hinges on the effective operation of Parliament, and the effective operation of this Parliament depends on each individual member of the Parliament.

Our role is to ensure that Cabinet and the Government act responsibly and are accountable to the people and the Parliament of this State. That parliamentary role has been eroded and devalued by successive National Party-led Governments. The executive arm of Government, the Cabinet, acts by itself and is shielded from any parliamentary scrutiny. It is almost as if it suffocates the Parliament. That situation needs to be changed.

I believe that in the next 12 months to three years we will have an opportunity to rethink the role of this Parliament. I recognise that the National Party is in Government, and that places a different responsibility upon that party. I am concerned about the excesses that we have seen in the past and also about what we might see in the future. Because of that, every back-bencher in the National Party has a special responsibility to think through his or her role to ensure that this Parliament works for the people of Queensland.

The Premier said that Parliament gives the democratic right to people to voice their views and thoughts. He added, "Therefore, it is vital and important." If he believes that, let us see him implement some changes in the Parliament. Also, the Auditor-General (Mr Craven) said that financial responsibility commences with Parliament and ends with Parliament, and I believe that to be true. We ought to ensure that there is that responsibility within this Parliament.

I hope that all of us will consider our roles as members of the Parliament and the need for an effective Parliament. The giving of an effectiveness to the Parliament begins now with the election of a Speaker to administer this Parliament with impartiality, effectiveness and experience, and I believe that the man to do that in this instance is the member for Ithaca.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (12.19 p.m.): In the debate on the election of the Speaker of this Parliament it is appropriate for us to study the rules of the Parliament, because the implementation of those rules will be the biggest hurdle for the new Speaker. We have to try to overcome some of the problems that have confronted us in the past. Those problems were outlined a few moments ago by the Leader of the Opposition and by some other members who preceded him in the debate. Of course, the rules are the Standing Orders of the Parliament.

On 16 March 1983 there was a debate in this Chamber on amendments to the Standing Orders. Although it should have been a major debate, that was not the case, and tremendous problems still exist with the Standing Orders. On that occasion the debate and all the work of the Standing Orders Committee finished up in a mess. In fact, that debate sparked the divisions that led to the political chaos that was experienced in this Parliament in August and to the closing down of the Parliament. Unfortunately and tragically, two years of hard work by the Standing Orders Committee went straight down the chute because of a few individuals on that committee. Their two years of stonewalling led us into a chaotic situation as far as the rules of the Parliament are concerned.

The two people who are to blame most for what happened to the Standing Orders are the Leader of the House (Mr Wharton) and the former leader of the Liberal Party (Dr Edwards). I accuse them of being the two people who brought about a most unsatisfactory situation in the Parliament.

I accuse Mr Wharton because he was the man who welshed on the decisions of the Standing Orders Committee. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing knows full well what the term "welshing" means. The Leader of the House welshed on the decisions of the Standing Orders Committee by the way in which he conveyed them to Ministers and to the House at a later stage.

As for Dr Edwards—his biggest fault was his failure to report, and to report properly, to his own party about what was happening at the meetings of the Standing Orders Committee. He did not talk to the Liberal Party Ministers, much less to the back-benchers, and that was evident on the day of the debate on the Standing Orders.

Mr Wharton did more than welsh on the decisions of the committee. At times he went against what the Premier was trying to do on the Standing Orders Committee and he led the National Party back-benchers in the House away from the decisions of that committee. He did that in spite of the members of the Standing Orders Committee having reached a compromise for him on more occasions than for any other member of the committee. That he cannot deny.

The man who bent over backwards and who is being praised here this morning—and I add my word of praise for him—was the former Speaker, Mr Sel Muller. He was the first person who was welshed on by Mr Wharton following a particular Standing Orders Committee meeting. Mr Wharton did not even want to bring the First Interim Report of the committee into the Parliament. He bailed out and used the procedures of this Assembly to prevent that report coming before it. Even when the last draft of the committee's report was ready for submission to the Parliament, members were still entitled to ask three questions. But, suddenly, Mr Wharton welshed on the former Speaker again and would not present the report of the Standing Orders Committee. He wanted the Standing Orders Committee to reconvene, and it did. His main objection to presenting the report was certain aspects of answering questions in the Parliament. The whole purpose of the meetings of the Standing Orders Committee was to reach a compromise between the various groups in the Parliament so that when the report was presented, it would be agreed to unanimously. That was the committee's intention so that the report would have the support of the whole Parliament.

That attitude is not new. It has been adopted concerning reports of previous Standing Orders Committees. That is what happened when former National Party Premiers and Labor Party Premiers presented Standing Orders Committee reports in the Parliament. Anyone reading the debates in 1962, 1958, 1950 and the early 1940s, following meetings of the Standing Orders Committee, will see what I am referring to.

The Standing Orders Committee is a high-powered committee because it comprises the leaders of each faction within the Parliament. Previously, once the principles for the new Standing Orders were agreed upon by that committee, the amendments were presented to the Parliament and agreed to unanimously. That practice was not good enough for Mr Wharton. When the final draft was completed he was forced to present the report, but he initiated a move to delay the debate on the Standing Orders of the Parliament.

I do not believe that Mr Wharton or the National Party ever really wanted reform of the Standing Orders. National Party members do not want to move with the times. Consequently, we have finished up in the very strange situation that this Parliament is the only Parliament in Australia, and probably the only Parliament in the whole Westminster system, that has in its Standing Orders rules for answers to questions but no rules relating to the way in which the questions themselves shall be asked.

All honourable members would agree that that is a somewhat anomalous situation. If honourable members read the debate that took place on 16 March this year, they will see what happened. They will also see who led us into that situation. We were led into that situation by Mr Wharton, by the deceit of the National Party back-benchers, and by the failure of Dr Edwards to tell all members of the Liberal Party exactly what was happening.

In this Assembly, rules exist for the tabling of questions upon notice. However, no rules exist for the tabling of answers. Again, that is a crazy situation. The new Speaker must preside over such a state of affairs. I repeat that although that situation occurred, the members of the Standing Orders Committee and the Premier never intended that it should occur. That shemozzle was created during the debate.

I give the Premier credit, because he was one of the members of the Standing Orders Committee who agreed to the new format provided that there was a compromise whereby members reduced from three to two the number of questions they were entitled to ask each day. That was the compromise that was finally reached. The Opposition was not happy with it. Several other members of the Parliament were not happy with it,

either. However, the Opposition went along with it because it was important that the report be received unanimously by the House in its final form. Honourable members know what happened once it reached the House. The debate turned into a shemozzle.

I recall that when the report first came before the House the member for Nundah (Sir William Knox) and the former member for Greenslopes (Mr Hewitt) asked questions of some members of the Standing Orders Committee about what was happening. They had not been properly informed by their leader about what was occurring. One could see clearly that some back-bench Liberal members at that time obviously did not understand the workings of Parliament, otherwise they might still have been here. I refer to the former members for Toowong, Stafford and Salisbury, who are no longer occupying seats in this Chamber.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They are sadly missed.

Mr CASEY: They might be sadly missed by some, but I am quite sure that they are not missed by some members at the back of the Chamber. I do not miss them very sadly, either.

Those Liberal members were like mushrooms; they were deliberately kept in the dark. They did not know what was happening to the Standing Orders, the rules by which the Parliament operates. The blame for that must lie with their then leader, who, surprisingly, did not even participate in the debate when it came before the Parliament. When the time came to vote, he voted against the committee's recommendations, just like "chief welsher" Wharton. It is a further sad saga in what has been, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, an abuse of Parliament over recent years by so many Ministers of this Assembly.

I sound one note of warning for the new Government back-benchers, and it is simply this: if they want to maintain their seats in Parliament, they should act as parliamentarians, work as parliamentarians and be parliamentarians. They should not become stooges for the National Party and mimics for the Premier or the Minister for Local Government, otherwise their term in this Chamber will be very short indeed. They will deserve that if they do not act as parliamentarians. This is the important place to which members were sent by their constituents to raise their problems, not just to do whatever the National Party desires of them.

Because of the failure to properly change the rules, in the coming months we will have the same old scene under the new Speaker. There will be an absence of Ministers during question-time. Sometimes Ministers, who are supposed to be answerable to the House for their portfolios and for the decisions of their departments, are absent during question-time. They are either attending the races in Japan, travelling around the countryside or at an early luncheon with someone. They are not even interested in the Parliament. On occasions in the past only four out of the 18 Ministers have been in the Parliament to answer questions. That is just not good enough.

We have seen an abuse of the time of Parliament with lengthy ministerial statements. Under the new Rules, they are, in fairness, supposed to be debated.

The new Standing Order 137 was supposed to be used to allow a flow of debate from both sides of the House on a matter of public importance. The first time a motion was put before the House under that Standing Order, "welsher" Wharton stepped in immediately and applied the gag. Such an abuse of the rules of Parliament clearly shows that there is insufficient opportunity for debate by private members in this Parliament, and the position is getting worse. There is no debate on motions appearing on the Business Papers. That used not be so. Each week a period used to be set aside for the general business of the Parliament. That is no longer so.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the need for a public accounts committee. That is a most important aspect of the role of any Parliament. For five years, to my knowledge, motions have appeared on the Business Papers of this Assembly for the establishment of such a committee; but, because of the format and rules of the Parliament, those motions have never been debated.

It can be clearly seen that a heavy burden will be laid on the shoulders of the member whom we elect as Speaker today. We want a Speaker who will create a contemporary Parliament. We want a Parliament in which the views put forward by members represent the views of all people throughout the State. Those views can properly

be aired only when fairness and balance are restored to debate in the Parliament. That can be achieved through the Standing Rules and Orders and the way in which they are interpreted and implemented by the Speaker of the Parliament. What Queensland wants today more than on any other occasion in its history is the opportunity for government by the Parliament, not government by Cabinet.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (12.32 p.m.): Mr Woodward—

An Opposition Member: Are you going to nominate yourself?

Mr BOOTH: I will come to that in good time; the Opposition need not worry.

Firstly, I pay a tribute to our former Speaker, Mr Muller. During the time he occupied the high office of Speaker, he was noted for his tolerance and common sense. As has been mentioned by previous speakers in this debate, it is a member of a political party who must occupy that office. Although Sel Muller was such a person, he behaved in an unbiased way, and I take this opportunity to have that recorded. The principal point that I want to make about him, however, is that on all occasions he was a gentleman. Anyone who can leave the office of Speaker and can have people in general accord him that accolade has served Queensland and the Parliament well and has carried out his duties to the best of his ability.

I now congratulate the ALP on admitting today, by not putting forward a nominee for the office of Speaker, that there is no-one within its ranks who is capable of doing the job. On this occasion, I am completely in agreement with the Leader of the Opposition. He has shown his first hint of common sense. He said, "We have no-one capable of performing the task and we will admit it to the people of Queensland." I agree with him, as does every member on this side of the House. Personally, I think the majority of Queenslanders, too, agree with him.

When I rose to speak, it was mentioned by a member of the Opposition—I cannot remember his electorate—

Mr Burns: You'd make a great Speaker!

Mr BOOTH: I cannot think of his name. He said to me, "You'd like to be Speaker." Of course I would. However, I congratulate the member for Toowoomba South, Mr Warner. I am sure he will carry out the duties of that high office with a great deal of sincerity and a high regard for Queensland. I take this opportunity to tell him that all Government members will be pleased to see him in the Chair.

Mr Mackenroth: Will you show him your ballot-paper?

Mr BOOTH: If the member for Chatsworth wants a bet, Mr Warner is at very short odds with me. He is the best certainty who has ever been sighted.

In this debate much has been said about independent attitudes in the House and the establishment of a public accounts committee, which was a major issue in the campaign before the last election. Those who put forward the idea at that time did not get very far; in fact, one or two of them suffered badly. So it is evident that the people of Queensland believe that Parliament's present controls over expenditure and so forth are quite sufficient.

Anybody who wants a public accounts committee to investigate Government expenditure denigrates those who accept responsibility for the various departments and denigrates the ability of the Auditor-General's Department. I have yet to see any great advantage flow from the establishment of such a committee. The electors had the opportunity to express their wishes on the matter, and it might have been better if the Leader of the Opposition had not mentioned it.

Mr Burns: Des, aren't you one of the blokes for whom we had to pass a Bill so that we could get you out of trouble?

Mr BOOTH: I am still here, and I will be here to give the honourable member for Lytton a fair bit of trouble; make no mistake about that.

A previous speaker mentioned the Milk Board and the Peanut Marketing Board. Those boards as well as every other board have to report to Parliament annually. During all the years that Queensland has had commodity boards, the only problem has been with the Peanut Marketing Board.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr BOOTH: I am not here to answer for what somebody else said. I am going to say this—

Mr Burns: Well, say something.

Mr BOOTH: I am saying plenty, and that is why Opposition members are reacting. When I hear Opposition members reacting, I know that I am doing OK. If they were sitting there and saying nothing, I would be worried.

Now I wish to pass on to the role of the Parliament.

Mr Burns: Who wrote that muck for you?

Mr BOOTH: Any material that I have here was compiled by me. Nobody will ever see anyone passing speeches to members of the National Party for them to deliver.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr BOOTH: I have this to say to the new members of the Opposition: every now and then a speech will be put in front of them and they will be told, "Dish this stuff out." It will be left-wing rubbish, but there is no doubt that they will have to read it. I am just foreshadowing something that confronts the new members of the Opposition, who have come here probably full of enthusiasm. However, after six weeks they will discover that all they are here for is to dish out the rubbish that their Whip gives them. That is why he looks annoyed now.

The member for Mackay mentioned that the role of Parliament is sometimes denigrated by some people. Unfortunately, it is. However, those who criticise do not suggest alternatives. Why can't they tell us what they would replace Parliament with? They are very willing to denigrate Parliament and parliamentarians, but they are very silent when asked what they would put in its place.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr BOOTH: I am speaking about anyone who denigrates Parliament; it could be the honourable member.

Mr Burns: The electors of Warwick.

Mr BOOTH: I do not think they would do anything like that. It is the trendy, little, rubbish newspapers in the honourable member's electorate that do things such as that.

I do not suggest that only the media denigrate Parliament and parliamentarians; we are denigrated by anyone and everyone. However, our critics are always reluctant to tell us what they propose in lieu of Parliament. It is about time they were asked that important question.

As I said at the outset, my main reason for speaking was to compliment the previous Speaker, who has now retired, and to congratulate the Speaker-elect, Mr Warner. I am sure that he will be successful and I hope that he lives to enjoy a long term of office.

Mr R. J. GIBBS (Wolston) (12.40 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mackay, who both spoke very strongly in support of the honourable member for Ithaca. I do not intend to be as gentlemanly as those who have spoken before me, because I think it is high time that somebody pointed out that the degeneration of this Parliament into a cesspit, as a former Speaker said, and its being surrounded by bad publicity can be attributed directly to the dismal performance of some former Speakers. I say that particularly because I notice that Mr Muller is present in the public gallery.

Although I have great respect for that gentleman and his ability, it is an absolute denigration of the role of Speaker of this Parliament and it is a shocking indictment of parliamentary democracy in this State that, on occasions when the Government and the Opposition have been at loggerheads and a crucial ruling has had to be made in accordance with the Standing Orders, the Premier or the Deputy Premier has walked over to the dais and put direct pressure on the occupant of the chair. The Premier has done it time and time again. The members of the press gallery have seen it happen; so has every member of this Parliament.

Should the member for Toowoomba South be elected Speaker, I believe it is quite proper to ask that he subscribe to some special oath or affirmation guaranteeing that he will make absolutely impartial rulings whilst he occupies the chair. I reiterate that I do not believe that that will happen. How can one expect it to happen when one has heard some of the innuendoes and rumours—and they have been very strong rumours—about the role of the Premier in this ballot? In the last couple of days he has even connived to organise his National Party colleagues to walk up in a line of three to vote.

Government Members interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: Government members know that that is correct. The Premier is extremely concerned about the distinct possibility of a number of his colleagues not being prepared to support the National Party nomination.

It is vital that the Speaker remain impartial. That has certainly not been the case in the past. Today we are concerned not only about the election of the Speaker but also about the accountability and honesty of Government members. The member for Warwick reminded me of a clown when he spoke about the lack of ability in the ranks of the Labor Party. When one looks at the line-up of Ministers opposite one could describe them in four words—hicks, spivs, scabs and dandies. Have a look at them! Every one of them fits that description.

The Opposition will continue to ensure the accountability of this Government and will continue to expose to the public of Queensland some of the corruption that occurs in this State.

Mr Hinze interjected.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I don't know what Russo wants to be called. The Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing will be going to Japan very shortly. I might call him "Mr Geisha"

The Opposition will be looking very carefully at the actions of this Government and at the continued smell of corruption which emanates from the Government side. Government members might think that in the past the Opposition has perhaps used the word a little loosely or has been paranoid about it. I find it no accident that, during the election campaign, the then leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Redcliffe, said during his travels round this State and on television that he would expose the corruption of this Government.

Members of the Opposition are waiting with bated breath to hear him deliver in this Parliament details of what he referred to during the election campaign. I am interested in what people other than the member for Redcliffe have said.

Some weeks ago I heard a former Minister—one who was defeated in the election—tell all and sundry who were prepared to listen how appalled he was in his three years as a Minister at decisions made in Cabinet, at jobs that came up for the boys and at how, on each such occasion, no matter what qualifications an applicant had, the first question asked in Cabinet was, "Is he on side? What are his politics?" Regardless of qualifications, job experience or anything else, the first requirement was that an applicant should be a National Party supporter and a bagman for people such as the Premier and the other people involved in the National Party organisation.

I have referred to a number of matters on which the Labor Party will be voicing concern during this session. We will be asking about the charade relative to the Year of the Family, which is proposed for next year. What an absolute joke that is! In saying that, I do not imply in any way that the Opposition is not interested in it or does not support its concept. However, honourable members would do well to consider the composition of the committee that has been established. Firstly, it is chaired by Florence Bjelke-Petersen. Next, Brian Cahill and Syd Williams—another supporter of the National Party—are on the committee. It is stacked to the eyeballs in an effort to gain the best political mileage for the National Party.

Mr Gunn: You'll keep.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I am glad that I will keep. The Minister, too, will keep. I will be watching him this session and I will enjoy doing so.

At 12.47 p.m.,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders Nos. 6 and 7, a ballot was taken by the Clerk, with the following result:—

Mr Warner	..	..	..	..	..	42
Mr Miller	..	..	..	..	..	39
Informal	..	..	..	..	..	1

Mr Warner submitted himself to the pleasure of the House and, on being called, was conducted to the chair by the mover and the seconder. Speaking from the dais, he said: Honourable members, I thank you for the high honour that you have conferred upon me.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer) (1.23 p.m.): On behalf of all members of the House, I extend to you congratulations on your election to this very important office. I am confident that you will have the assistance of all members in ensuring that the business of the House is conducted in an orderly and disciplined manner. I am also confident that you will discharge your duties and responsibilities impartially and without fear or favour. You are assured of the complete co-operation of the Government. I wish you every success in your term of office.

Mr WRIGHT (Rockhampton—Leader of the Opposition) (1.24 p.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I join with the Premier in offering you the personal congratulations of members. The task that you have taken upon yourself is not an easy one, but I offer you co-operation in the hope that this Parliament can work effectively and impartially from the Chair.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah) (1.25 p.m.): I wish to support the remarks made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Liberal Party, I say that we will give you all the support and assistance that you require of us in conducting the affairs of the House. I think it should be pointed out that you have chaired the Select Committee of Privileges, and have done the job extremely well. I am sure that you will carry out the duties of the office of Speaker with great dignity, and with great credit to the Parliament. I also take the opportunity of wishing you many happy returns for Saturday.

Mr MILLER (Ithaca) (1.26 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and my own leader in offering you congratulations on obtaining the position of Speaker of this House. I also wish you a very happy and successful term.

PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I desire to inform honourable 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 3 o'clock.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—Premier and Treasurer): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 2.12 p.m. tomorrow in the late Legislative Council Chamber.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.27 p.m.