

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 1989**

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. L. W. Powell, Isis) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

- The Honourable Angelo Vasta (Validation of Office) Bill;
- Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Act Repeal Bill;
- Education (General Provisions) Act Amendment Bill;
- Appropriation Bill 1989-1990 (No. 1).

**INCORPORATION OF MATERIAL IN *HANSARD*; READING OF SPEECHES**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 10 November 1988 I made a statement to you with regard to the suitability of material being incorporated in *Hansard*. I think it is proper that we should remind ourselves that *Hansard* should be regarded as a record of what is actually spoken in the House and thus any proposal to incorporate unread matter into the record should be treated with the utmost of caution. The material should not be incorporated in *Hansard* unless—

- (a) it closely relates to the speech, or
- (b) illustrates, complements or elucidates that speech.

Material that is publicly and readily available elsewhere, for example, newspaper articles, Government papers which have already been tabled in the House, law reports or extracts therefrom, the Fitzgerald inquiry report, and the judges commission reports, should not be incorporated in *Hansard*. Speeches or extracts from those particular documents should be referred to by page number and paragraph. Speeches or extracts previously made in the House or material previously incorporated should not be sought to be reincorporated in *Hansard*.

Unpublished material such as correspondence from constituents may, however, be considered for incorporation in *Hansard*. Tables and other printed material which need to be reproduced in visual form for comprehension may also be considered for incorporation in *Hansard*.

Incorporation of material in *Hansard* should be sought on the understanding that the final decision on the practicability of the incorporation shall be made by the Speaker.

In summary, *Hansard* should be the record of the spoken word in the Parliament, and I intend to be very careful in allowing matters to be tabled and incorporated. Honourable members should, however, realise that documents that they see as part of their speeches can be tabled so that people can refer to them at a later date.

With regard to the conduct of debate in the Parliament, I think it also should be said that parliamentary debates should be just that. They should be debates. They should not be a series of presented speeches which, to all intents and purposes, appear to be totally and completely unrelated.

As a result, therefore, I intend to rule out of order members who read written speeches.

**Mr Hamill:** And Ministers?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ipswich!

Clearly, members will often want to refer to notes. However, the speech of an honourable member ought to be a speech that refers to the subject before the Chair and refers to other speeches already made. It ought not to be a prepared presentation which is merely boringly read into the *Hansard* record.

There will be four exceptions to the rule. They are, firstly, Ministers or members who are introducing legislation. These speeches naturally have to be prepared and have to contain a certain amount of technical detail, so therefore it would be proper for them to be read. Secondly, the Opposition spokesman responding to a Bill needs to have before him a prepared speech that will be able to clearly present the points of view of the Opposition on the issue. Thirdly, members who are presenting their maiden speech in the Parliament may, if they so desire, read that speech. Fourthly, Ministers who are making ministerial statements will be permitted to read those statements.

In presenting a debate to the Parliament, members should have regard for what has previously been said and also have regard to Standing Orders on the matter of being repetitious. I am sure that, if honourable members will enter into the spirit of the direction that I have given, our Parliament will be more of a debating forum rather than a forum for prepared, presented speeches.

**Honourable members: Hear, hear!**

### SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

#### Matter Raised by Deputy Leader of Opposition

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr T.J. Burns, MLA, raising a matter of privilege. This is not a matter for the Speaker to resolve but rather one that should be referred to the Privileges Committee.

**Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (2.38 p.m.):** I move—

“That the complaint and the letter of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Burns, be referred to the Privileges Committee for appropriate action.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 36		NOES, 44	
Ardill	Santoro	Ahern	Lingard
Beanland	Schuntner	Alison	Littleproud
Beard	Sherlock	Austin	McCauley
Braddy	Smith	Berghofer	McKechnie
Burns	Smyth	Borbidge	McPhie
Campbell	Vaughan	Burreket	Menzel
Casey	Warburton	Chapman	Muntz
Comben	Warner	Clauson	Neal
D'Arcy	Wells	Cooper	Nelson
De Lacy	White	Elliott	Newton
Eaton	Yewdale	Fraser	Perrett
Goss		Gamin	Randell
Gygar		Gibbs, I. J.	Row
Hamill		Gilmore	Sherrin
Hayward		Glasson	Simpson
Innes		Gunn	Slack
Knox		Harper	Stoneman
Lee		Henderson	Tenni
Lickiss		Hinton	Veivers
McElligott		Hobbs	
McLean	<i>Tellers:</i>	Hynd	<i>Tellers:</i>
Milliner	Mackenroth	Katter	FitzGerald
Palaszczuk	Prest	Lester	Stephan

Resolved in the negative.

### RESIGNATION OF MR SPEAKER

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in view of the result of that division, you give me no option but to offer my resignation to the Clerk.

*Whereupon Mr Speaker, preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, left the Chamber and Mr Row (Hinchinbrook) took the chair.*

**Honourable members interjected.**

*Whereupon Mr Row left the chair.*

**The CLERK:** Honourable members, the House will be resumed at the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 2.48 to 4 p.m.

#### VACANCY IN OFFICE OF SPEAKER

**The CLERK:** Honourable members, I have to advise the House that this day I received the following letter—

“5 July 1989.

Dear Mr. Woodward,

In view of the fact that the Parliament has decided to oppose my recommendation on the matter referred to the House, I hereby tender my resignation as Speaker.

Yours sincerely  
Lin Powell”.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 9, I have to report that by reason of such resignation a vacancy now exists in the office of Speaker. I will call for nominations. Any nominations must be seconded.

#### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

**Mr GOSS** (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (4 p.m.): I nominate the member for Isis as Speaker of this Parliament—

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (4.01 p.m.): I move—

“That Mr Kevin Rowson Lingard do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr AHERN:** Honourable members will recall that the member for Fassifern previously held the very important position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He filled that role with distinction. I am sure that all honourable members will support his nomination.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr AHERN:** I suppose that today Opposition members will not shut up, because they have got a bit of listening to do.

Today in Queensland and throughout Australia every eye was on this Parliament to debate the Fitzgerald commission report. What did we see? We saw a shabby conspiracy between the ALP, the Liberal Party and the former Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It is the Kingaroy cow yard conspiracy revisited. That is what happened today.

I understand Sir Ted Lyons was involved also. Today Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen went to the 23rd level of the Parliamentary Annexe for lunch. In the lift he said to a person, “Today is the day that I will have my vengeance.” A former Premier has used the Labor Party and the Liberal Party as agents of his own vindictiveness. It is the Kingaroy cow yard conspiracy revisited. Tony Koch will make a video on this and it will be run for two nights on Channel 7; there is no doubt about that. Angus Innes and Wayne Goss have again been used. They are the agents of the former Premier. What a farce! It all happened today in this Parliament.

**Mr Goss:** You are the one who is taking this Parliament back 10 years.

**Mr AHERN:** The Leader of the Opposition is going red, and you will get redder by the end of the day, because your blokes are after you. They could forgive Peter Beattie for it, but they will not forgive you.

Firstly, what was this intrinsically important matter that had to be referred to the Privileges Committee? I, as Premier of Queensland, rose in my place in reply to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who asked whether I had had something to do with the homosexual lobby. I never had anything to do with the homosexual lobby—never in my life! There is no prima facie case whatsoever. The AIDS Council of Queensland is not the homosexual lobby.

**Mr Burns:** You are on record in the paper.

**Mr AHERN:** If you say that outside this place, they will take your house and your boat.

There is no substance at all in what has been said. The other issue was: was there consultation? I lay on the table of the House—and I suppose I do not now have to seek leave to do so—the press releases by the former Minister for Education which refer to the consultation process that took place. What a farce! How about the deep necessity for this matter to go before the Privileges Committee? It was a stunt, nothing else—a stunt by the Labor and Liberal Parties in concert with their new ally, the member for Isis, to try to embarrass the Premier of this State. As far as I am concerned, they have been found out. There is no way in the world that the Government would allow the time of the Privileges Committee and the Parliament to be taken up for one second longer than was necessary with something which was simply part of a conspiracy to try to embarrass this Government and me as Premier. It will be seen as such, and it was at the time. What a nonsense! That is all it was.

For the Speaker to say that in his opinion the matter had to be referred to the Privileges Committee was not a fair interpretation. What a nonsense! Without respect for all the traditions of Westminster democracy, the member for Isis—the Speaker—turned around and said, “I think the ‘Ayes’ have it.” To my knowledge, that is the first time that a Speaker has ever said that. So he has resigned, and so he should. He had to.

There is no doubt at all that Kevin Lingard will grace the office of Speaker very creditably. However, I want to return to this issue of the new coalition, because this is an issue which you guys in the Labor and Liberal Parties will have to address out in the community. You will have to tell the public why it is that you allowed yourselves to be used by yesterday’s man—yesterday’s vindictive old man—who came into this building to get square with me, Mike Ahern, because of my support for the Fitzgerald inquiry. He has been sending me messages for months, indicating that he is going to get even with me, to get square. Today the Labor and Liberal Parties took the bait and allowed him to use them. Today, Sir Joh, Sir Edward and Lin Powell had lunch on level 23. Today a conspiracy was devised, after which there was consultation with the Labor Party. Some of the factions of the Labor Party already have advised us that this was cooked up yesterday.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Carry on.

**Mr AHERN:** Oh, yes! The honourable member knows that it is true and his leader knows that it is true. It was all cooked up before. The Leader of the Liberal Party was advised yesterday of the conspiracy, so you have been used.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr AHERN:** There is no doubt that they will be on Channel 7 again, with Tony Koch doing the commentary. This is all about what happened before.

Today, what were we about to do? We were here to debate this important document which talks about respect for the Westminster system. It talks about encouraging Governments to have respect for people who do deals with vindictive political opponents of the Government. What nonsense! Frankly, this is the new coalition in Queensland—the ALP, the Liberal Party and Sir Joh.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr AHERN:** Members of the Opposition are laughing. I can tell them that we are laughing because there are photographs of all that has been going on today. Those photographs will be on TV tonight.

At the moment, there are some strange coalitions around. There is one in Tasmania between the ALP and the greenies. This is our version of it in Queensland, with the Labor and Liberal Parties in coalition. Quite frankly, today should have been used for a proper discussion of high standards of parliamentary democracy. What has happened is that a conspiracy arose to subvert that process.

This time is not going to be able to be used to debate the Fitzgerald report. Apparently we will have to debate the election of a new Speaker—or else the Labor Party and the Liberal Party want to use the opportunity, presented by the fact that there is no Speaker in the Parliament, to impugn Tony Fitzgerald, his staff and other members of Parliament.

**An Opposition member:** That's not right.

**Mr AHERN:** Well, I think it is right. I will be surprised if the debate is not used in that way. I believe that that is the intention. I might have frightened off members of the Opposition, but that was the intention. Because there is no Speaker now, we can say what we like about Tony Fitzgerald; we can say whatever we like about his methods; we can say whatever we like about the character of members of Parliament, and carry it on for ever because of the unique advantage that is offered. What a grubby political tactic! This has delayed the implementation of the Gary Crooke legislation.

**Mr Wells:** You could have got a better excuse for stalling.

**Mr AHERN:** It has. That legislation was to be introduced at 3.30 p.m. so that people could have a look at it, but no. It is all there. As far as I am concerned, this has been a black day in Queensland's constitutional history—a day when the former Speaker of this Parliament played a political stunt with members of the Labor and Liberal Parties who allowed themselves to be used.

I want to make some statements about the number of times that this conspiracy has acted against me. Down through the months I have been receiving cryptic messages and threats from people about the Fitzgerald commission and about the consequences of it. It is all there, and I stand steadfast. I have stood strongly for the commission. I presented it courageously. No Labor Government has ever been game to do that.

Mr Clerk, there is no doubt at all that the Labor and Liberal Parties have been found out in this particular matter. They have been found out playing tootsies in this argument. It should have been above political parties that have high standards. However, they have been found out in relation to this matter and they will pay the penalty. There is no doubt about that at all.

There is no question, either, about their courage in relation to the Vasta matter. Where was their courage? They said, "Let's postpone it for seven days." They did not have the numbers in the party room to get it. Back-door deals were done between the Labor and Liberal Parties, who said, "Let's get together and talk about a seven-day adjournment." These little tootsy, toe-to-toe arrangements were made between the Labor and Liberal coalition in this State. They had tête-a-têtes and said, "Let's delay the Vasta considerations for seven days." Later on it was found who was telling lies, but that ought to have been obvious straight away.

This has been a black day for Queensland. The Labor Party and the Liberal Party have got some real explaining to do. There is no doubt in my mind that this conspiracy took place. I have no doubt in my mind and the media are scoffing about it. Some factional members of the Labor Party are also talking about it. It will not be long before some members of the Liberal Party start to talk about it, too. A message I have just received indicates that Sir Joh and Sir Ted Lyons are sitting up in the Parliamentary Annexe watching the television to see how good the members of the Opposition and the members of the Liberal Party will be on their feet when they come to reply. They are waiting to see how their boys will perform on the floor of the House. The members of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are being used.

I stand firm. Today I came to the Parliament to debate the Fitzgerald report and introduce legislation in a proper way. The eyes of Australia were on us. Australians are saying, "Let us have a look at how you debate these important, high-standing principles described in the report." Members of the media are ready to interview members and have run into one of the grubbiest little party-political tricks in the business. This is a visit into the past.

**Mr Burns:** You haven't got the guts; that's your trouble.

**Mr AHERN:** Nonsense! Having the matter referred to the Privileges Committee has always been a stunt and the honourable member knew it before he started. It was designed to be a party-political stunt.

Today the parliamentary National Party came into this place ready for a debate on political standards—ready to do the right thing by the people of Queensland, get on with the business of running the Government of this State and legislate in its interests. The parliamentary National Party has run into the shabbiest election-year stunt of all time, which will rebound heavily on the Labor and Liberal Parties. They will be red around the ears for ages because of it. I hope that television shows are made about it. I understand that the media are already outside caucusing on what they ought to say about it.

Kevin Lingard is an excellent nominee for this position. Today he comes before this House with strong support and with a proven track record of an excellent parliamentary performance as Speaker. I am pleased to nominate him for the position and wish to say a word on behalf of his good wife, who in the past served her role as wife of the Speaker with great credit.

**Hon. W. A. M. GUNN** (Somerset—Deputy Premier and Minister for Public Works, Housing and Main Roads) (4.18 p.m.): This is one of the most shonky, shabby stunts ever brought before this House during my 18 years in Parliament. The media were tipped off prior to the sitting of the House. It was all arranged by Mr Powell, Sir Joh, Mr Goss and Mr Innes. I could add Sir Ted Lyons to the list, but he is deaf and would not have heard what happened. It is sad to see the former Premier, Sir Joh, stoop to this obnoxious coalition. This stunt will cost the ALP and the Liberal Party dearly in electoral terms. There is no doubt about that. By indulging in this conspiracy, the previous Speaker has dragged the status of Speaker to its lowest level ever.

Kevin Lingard was an excellent Speaker. That is not only my opinion; it was also the opinion of members opposite. Honourable members will now be given another opportunity to lift the standards of this House back to where they should be.

**An Opposition member:** Put away your notes.

**Mr GUNN:** I will have something to say later to the honourable member opposite.

The ALP and the Liberal Party are guilty of gross hypocrisy. They called for quick action on the Fitzgerald report, but have now indulged in this shonky charade, thereby wasting Parliament's time. The Queensland ALP is in disarray, like its Federal colleagues. I recently visited Canberra and have never seen such a mess in all my life. The members of the Liberal Party do not know where they are or where they have been. They are suffering from what is called the Liberal syndrome and they caught it from John Moore

and Wilson Tuckey. The ALP and the Liberal Party never wanted this report. They thought the inquiry would last a month and, to their surprise, it has been a great success. They do not like it at all and have nothing to go on. Therefore, today they have pulled this very shabby trick, which is no credit to any of them.

Kevin Lingard was always a good Speaker. He will be the next Speaker of this Parliament, which is one bright spot. Today we can see members opposite in their true colours; they are clowns. This is typical of what happens on a day like today. I hope that in due course this House can come to an arrangement so that this type of eventuality will never again happen, because it does not do this Parliament any good whatsoever.

I will not speak for too long because I am absolutely convinced that our next Speaker will be Kevin Lingard, who will carry out his duties in a manner befitting this House. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion of the Premier in nominating Kev Lingard as the next Speaker of this Parliament.

**Mr GOSS (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (4.21 p.m.):** I move—

“That Mr Lionel William Powell do take the chair of the House as Speaker.”

I make this nomination for a number of reasons.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** Honourable members can make all the noise that they like; I have all day and all tomorrow.

I make this nomination because, firstly, the honourable member for Isis has been the most independent Speaker that we have seen in this place for a long time, and, secondly, the position of Speaker deserves to be supported, no matter how that office is conducted.

**Mr Austin interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** The honourable member can interject all he likes. We will go all night, if he wishes.

The third reason for his nomination is a very practical reason, that is, that the Labor Party knows very well that it would not get its nominee elected, and it is preferable that this House have Mr Powell as Speaker rather than a Speaker who has been selected by the National Party.

The great shame is that this need not have happened. If this Premier and his rabid Leader of the House had simply given different instructions to their fox-terrier Whip, this could have all been avoided. Instead we all saw the National Party Whip, Mr FitzGerald, come into the House, go up to Austin and say, “What are they going to do?” Austin gave the orders and Ahern fell into line. When the Speaker followed the normal practice of turning to the National Party Whip—

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** Government members are going red in the face because they have been caught out treating this Parliament with contempt and caught out treating this Parliament in the same old National Party, shoddy, shonky way. What is its object? What is the sleazy, despicable object of this exercise—to get rid of an independent Speaker so that the Government can control the debate on the Fitzgerald report.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** Government members say that the Opposition has been used. Do they want me to answer that? They do not want me to answer, because they are afraid of what I will say.

As everybody in this place knows, the truth is that it would be folly for the Labor Party to engage in any so-called conspiracy that would remove Powell and replace him with Kevin Lingard. What a joke! That is no conspiracy for anybody to be involved in.

We would lose out on that. What happened was that the Premier was afraid of being exposed for misleading Parliament and afraid of having the Privileges Committee examine his record—examine his guilt—in misleading this Parliament and of being caught out. If the Premier had nothing to fear from the Privileges Committee, he would have allowed that letter to be referred to it for appropriate action.

But he was afraid of the Privileges Committee and he saw an opportunity to get rid of his life-long enemy, Powell. They hate each other's guts, and everybody knows it. The Premier has been waiting for his chance to get square. He has been waiting to get square ever since the day when Powell—

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** What rubbed salt into the wounds was that Powell defeated Ahern in his first party-room ballot. When Mike Ahern became Premier, he wanted Booth as Speaker, but, in his first ballot, Powell beat him at his first test as leader. The Premier was beaten by Lin Powell in the party room in his first test as leader and he has been looking for a chance to get square. Today he got it, and there is the bonus of getting rid of an independent Speaker and getting a Bjelke-Petersen Speaker and Bjelke-Petersen Minister. What a throw-back the Premier is, going back to a Speaker and a Minister who was appointed by Joh Bjelke-Petersen! Mr Lingard was one of those who agreed to become a Bjelke-Petersen Minister. At the time the member for Cairns said that Mr Lingard was the first recorded case of the rat swimming towards the sinking ship. Today Mr Lingard has repeated his actions, because again he is swimming towards a sinking ship.

The conduct of this National Party Premier, led around by the nose by the hard man, the Leader of the House, has shown his contempt for the Parliament and contempt for the Speaker. People should understand that this need not have happened.

The facts are as I have outlined them. The Labor Party had no power over whether or not Mr Speaker resigned. We in the Opposition were caught by surprise in the same way as others were. What the Government effectively did was pass a vote of no confidence in Mr Speaker in the very week that Tony Fitzgerald, QC, spoke about the importance of Parliament and about the way the Premier, in conspiracy with Joh Bjelke-Petersen, prostituted this place. Let no-one forget that there is one person in this place, and only one person, who served right through the Bjelke-Petersen Premiership. Who is that? Mike Ahern! He is the only one who served right through the Bjelke-Petersen Premiership. Out of the 20 years, he was here the longest. When the fight against corruption and cronyism was on, where was Mike? He was under the bed! For eight years he sat and hid on the back bench; for eight years he was the National Party numbers man—the Whip. He was Joh's numbers man in this House and for another eight years he was a Minister. He was there when, in relation to the Lucas and Sturgess reports, Joh adopted the same tactic as we are seeing now with the Fitzgerald report.

**Mr Ahern:** You know I can't take a point of order. Is that what this is about?

**Mr GOSS:** The Premier did not set up the Fitzgerald inquiry. We heard him bleating and pleading on radio and television, saying, "Give me credit. Give me credit." Who set up the inquiry? It was set up by the Premier's predecessor. The Premier was caught on the roller-coaster and is trying to make a virtue out of necessity. This report is not the Premier's work, it is Tony Fitzgerald's. This inquiry was set up by accident by an incompetent Police Minister. The Government made a mistake. The proof of that is that, before the inquiry was set up, Bill Gunn was favoured to become Premier. As soon as the truth began to be exposed by Tony Fitzgerald, the National Party dumped the then prospective Premier who had set up the inquiry. The National Party realised he was a fool and had blown the National Party out of the water. The second mistake the Government made was to pick Tony Fitzgerald. It intended to pick Pratt, and everybody knows that. The National Party got bluffed out of that and picked Fitzgerald. Queensland was done another favour.

In claiming credit, the Premier is being hypocritical. He would get some credit if for once in those 20 years he had stood on his hind legs and spoken out. However, what does he do? To get himself off the hook, the Premier quotes repeatedly the fourth-bottom paragraph on page 6 of the Fitzgerald report, which states that, merely because a person is part of an institution, it does not make that person guilty along with all the rest. Of course, he does not quote the third paragraph on page 8, which states—

“Where misconduct is institutionalized, guilt and innocence are not a matter of black and white. There are infinite shades of grey. Some people have been merely incompetent”—

that is the Deputy Premier—

“or the victims of inertia”—

that is the Premier—

“(whether through disinterest or self-interest).”

Was it not self-interest that made the Premier sit back and keep quiet until his turn came?

Honourable members should also remember the words on page 7, which deal with what is happening at present with the deliberate stalling attempt by Sparkes dictating to Ahern. On top of that, they should remember the deliberate tactics being engaged in at the direction of the National Party organisation by people such as Mr Alison and Mr Stoneman to attempt to undermine the Fitzgerald report and to cast doubt on it in the public mind. It is part of a concerted and systematic attack. Of course, Tony Fitzgerald saw it coming and referred to it at page 7, where he stated—

“There are many ways in which the agenda for reform could be delayed or subverted by political or bureaucratic opponents. This has happened previously.”

It happened with the Lucas report and the Sturgess report. The Premier was in Parliament at the time of the Lucas report and the Sturgess report and he did nothing about them.

All honourable members know that it is basic and acceptable parliamentary practice for a Speaker in a case such as this to refer a letter to the Privileges Committee. The Premier took a calculated decision to shaft Powell. In doing so, he shafted the Parliament at the very time when the institution of Speaker and the institution of Parliament—

**Mr Ahern:** He had it written out. It was all set up.

**Mr GOSS:** The Premier and I saw him write it out. He sat there and wrote it out after the Premier shafted him. In the very week of the Fitzgerald report, the Premier took a calculated gamble, because he knew he had the numbers to put his man in there— a Joh man. Because he knows what that will enable him to achieve in the control and management of this debate, the Premier is putting Mr Lingard back in control. Furthermore, he settles an old score with a man whose guts he hates.

I do not care about the Premier and Powell or the faction-fighting in the National Party. It is split wide open and it deserves to be, because it is reaping the harvest of 20 years of corruption and 20 years of hiding under the bed.

Now that there is a bit of a lull from the Government side of the House, I will answer specifically the proposition put forward that the Labor Party was being used.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** I did what I had a duty to do—to support my deputy, a member of the Opposition who made a complaint after having caught the Premier out for misleading the Parliament. The Premier was caught out and he will not allow the Privileges Committee to consider the matter.

I was watching Mr FitzGerald and, on the Premier's orders, he shook his head and denied the Speaker, the Parliament and the Westminster system.

**Mr Ahern:** Deny you were consulted about it.

**Mr GOSS:** The Premier did it deliberately. Now he has told a lot of lies to attempt to get himself off the hook. However, he does not have to worry because he has something that the National Party has always had and always used—the use of the numbers to get its way in the Parliament. When the pressure is on—when the crunch is on—the Premier does exactly what his predecessor did. He was running around the State as an eager and ambitious back-bencher—which was a long time—and as a subservient Minister praising and stroking Joh in public, yet digging away and needling in private. Now that Joh has gone, he is saying repeatedly, “This corruption, this cronyism—it’s all Joh, you know.”

The Premier was in Parliament at the time of the Lucas report and the Sturgess report. He knew about the corruption and the cronyism and he ignored it, because he was after the main prize, and he got it. On National Party standards, he should be proud of himself because he got the prize. Queensland paid a price, but the Premier got the prize he was after.

I will now look at the history of the position of the Parliament. Tony Fitzgerald was so concerned about it that he specifically referred to it at some length in his report. I will not refer to it at length. However, the section at pages 123, 124 and 125 sets out what has been wrong with the Parliament and what is needed. Each and every Government member has been a party to the universally recognised abysmal way in which the Government has conducted the Parliament. The National Party must stand condemned in a corporate sense for the way in which it went along with that.

Since Mr Powell has been Speaker, things have improved somewhat. The Opposition has not achieved as much change from the Chair as it would have liked, but it has achieved much more than it did with previous Speakers. That is why the Opposition is keen to keep Powell in the chair. It does not want to give the Government the opportunity to dump him from the chair and put a National Party member in. The Government is able to do that.

The Premier said that he was caught by surprise. However, within half an hour he had his numbers locked up and his man ready. He knew what he was doing. It could have been avoided.

What we have in this State—and everybody knows it—is a serious problem in the police force. We have corrupt police. How many? I suppose we are about to find out, with all the trials and so on. However, clearly, Queensland has a significant number of corrupt police. Hopefully, the majority are honest. There is also a significant problem in the Justice Department, which has been the subject of a blistering attack in this report. There are problems in the prisons department and the arts department, with people going to gaol, and there are problems in the commercial world, with certain selected friends of the National Party getting the tenders and everybody else getting the shaft.

Queensland has all these problems. Everybody knows it, and everybody has known it for years. It has been exposed and confirmed by Tony Fitzgerald in his report. But who was responsible for that? Where does it come back to? It comes back to this place and the paramountcy, the ascendancy, of Parliament, which was lost under a Government and under a party of which all the present members of this National Party Government have been members, accomplices and co-conspirators. Now they want to come into this Chamber and pretend that this is something to do with Joh. Joh is gone but all the other members of his Government are here.

**Mr Ahern:** He’s here. He’s watching you.

**Mr GOSS:** I do not know where Joh is; I do not care. The Premier should not blame me for his factional problems.

The Premier was here with Joh, arm in arm, as successive Speakers abused the Standing Orders of this Parliament. Mr Ahern and Joh were arm in arm as this Parliament descended to the very depths of all Australian and all Westminster Parliaments. He was there, he took part in it and he is repeating it himself again today. The members of this National Party Government have learned nothing from all those years and they have

learned nothing from this report. They have learned nothing at all, and until they do learn something, this State and this report have got no hope whatsoever, because the reason that this State has got a bad Parliament and the reason that this State has got a bad Government is the corrupt electoral laws.

What is going on now? The Government is seeking to deny the very crux of the Fitzgerald report. Sparkes gave the orders on Sunday night, so the big stall came. After two days of public pressure, the Premier came out today and said, "We will abide by the ruling of the electoral commission." That is as I understand it. But the trick, the con, the snag is the six-week delay that the Government has built into the system to stop it happening before the next election. What this Government wants to do is use corrupt electoral laws to steal the election, to steal the Government from the people of this State. What an ultimate joke for this Government to go to the people on corrupt electoral laws and seek a mandate to clean up corruption! That is what this Government is after. That is what it is on about. It just goes to show the power of Sir Robert Sparkes and the National Party machine men who run this place and who run the Premier, because they put him there. Every member of the Opposition and every Government back-bencher knows that the decision to chop Bjelke-Petersen came from up the hill. Sparkes got on the phone and told them that Gunn was out and Ahern was in. When the Premier got his green light and his riding instructions, he was off and running. Today things are still run that way.

Does the Premier not realise that if this State is to have any chance and if his place in history as Premier of this State is to have any hope—and for Heaven's sake, he waited pathetically for 20 years to get there—he has to be his own man? Now that he is there, can he not be his own man? Can he not do that, not just for his own sake but for the sake of the people of this State? It really is fundamentally important. What we are seeing this week in Queensland is an attempt to stall, delay and deny the fundamental recommendations of the Fitzgerald report.

**A Government member interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** Members of the Opposition are not going to be denied their opportunity to say what they think in this important debate simply because the Government wants to close the place down at 4.30 tomorrow afternoon. What a corrupt, despicable and low practice on the part of this Government! The Parliament resumed at 2.30 p.m. today, Wednesday. The Government wants to close it down at 10 o'clock tonight and close it down at 4.30 tomorrow afternoon. That allows for about eight hours' debate. That is five or six minutes per member.

**Mr Burns:** \$3m an hour.

**Mr GOSS:** \$3m an hour.

If every member wanted to speak, members would be allowed six or seven minutes each. If half the members wanted to speak, they would be allowed about 14 minutes each. What a joke! This Government is corrupting and prostituting the very spirit of this report that it claims it wishes to implement and that it is implementing. It is public relations instead of performance. It is the same old Bjelke-Petersen practice. Unfortunately for Queensland, the Premier learned some things from him, but he never learned anything for himself or for the future of this State.

Members of this Government talk about Joh Bjelke-Petersen and his influence on this place. Sure, the influence of Joh Bjelke-Petersen is very considerable when it comes to this place, but there is no greater product of the Bjelke-Petersen years than the person who sat in this place longest with him, and that is the Premier, Mr Ahern. The Premier was here with Joh Bjelke-Petersen longer than any other member of this Government. He was here and saw the way in which Joh Bjelke-Petersen ran this State. He saw the way in which he ran this Parliament. He saw the way in which he ran Speakers. The Premier was here the longest and he never spoke out.

In fact the Premier has tried to say that because Tony Fitzgerald says on page 6 that just because one is part of an institution it does not mean that one is guilty, that somehow absolves him. What a lie! What a falsehood! I will cite one example. When the Premier put his hand on the knife that went into Mr Justice Douglas' back, he branded himself as somebody who was prepared to politically interfere with the appointment of the Chief Justice. What more fundamental——

**Mr Ahern:** What's wrong with Wally Campbell?

**Mr GOSS:** Does the Premier deny that? Does he deny that he stabbed Douglas in the back? Does he deny voting with Joh and Hinze?

**Mr Ahern:** He did a top job, Wally Campbell.

**Mr GOSS:** The Premier did a top job. He is proud of it, is he? He should be ashamed of himself because when he put his hand on the knife that went into Douglas' back, he branded himself as no better than Bjelke-Petersen and Ted Lyons. The Premier accuses them of politically interfering in the judiciary, and they did, but his hand was on the knife, too.

There is a well-known saying in the law that justice delayed is justice denied. As I have said, what this Government is doing in regard to electoral reform is delaying it, and that is denying it. It is unfortunate that we have been side-tracked by this messy, grubby exercise.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** Government members should not point at us. They were the ones who voted against the Speaker.

Opposition members voted for the Speaker; Government members voted against the Speaker of the Parliament. Why did they do that? They voted against the Speaker of the Parliament because he wanted simply to refer a letter from another member to the Privileges Committee. Is that the heinous crime that the Speaker committed? The Speaker wanted to refer to the Privileges Committee a letter on a matter of privilege. Government members shafted the Speaker for that. What would they have done if he had sat them down? Would they have taken him out and shot him? For Heaven's sake! If a Speaker's only crime is to ask the House to refer a letter from another member to the Privileges Committee and Government members vote against the Speaker on that ground alone, they should not blame us when he reacts against that. Government members are the authors of this delay, they are the authors of their own misery and they are the authors of the grubby exercise whereby they seek to replace the Speaker.

This is a sad day for the people of this State. It is a sad day for the Parliament. I sincerely hope that it will be a very sad day for Mike Ahern and the National Party, because they deserve it. I suspect, unfortunately, that today they will get away with it because they know that they have the numbers. They will use the numbers in the same way that they have used them before. How will the Government get away with it? The Premier knows that there are members of his own back bench who are unhappy with what he has done. I bet London to a brick on that the Premier will follow the same corrupt practice that used to be followed by his predecessor, that is, when it comes to the vote he will make his members line up on his side of the House and have their so-called secret ballot where the Premier and Mr Austin can look over their shoulders and make sure that they vote the right way. If the Premier truly wants to uphold the principle of a secret ballot, I challenge him to provide some privacy—some screen, some true secret ballot—so that every member can vote in a true secret ballot. Or will the Premier make his members vote in a way in which he can look over their shoulders and get Sparkes to take away their endorsement if they fail to vote the way that the party machine dictates? That is a challenge for the Premier. Let him answer it. Let us see whether there will be a true secret ballot or whether we will have the same practice of Mike Ahern sitting where his Premier sat before, looking over the shoulder of the back-

benchers and calling in Sparkes if a member fails to toe the line. All of the members of the press will be sitting in the gallery above and watching as the so-called secret ballot occurs.

**Mr Stephan:** You've moved them on.

**Mr GOSS:** They are out the back watching the proceedings on television where they do not have to watch the honourable member, too.

As I said earlier, the Opposition supports the nomination of the member for Isis. Frankly, I do not think much of his politics. Members of the Labor Party differ fundamentally—

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr GOSS:** We differ strongly from his very conservative political views on a number of points—views which many Government members supported when it was convenient to do so because the old man supported them. Notwithstanding that, I think that most commentators agree that Mr Powell has been a lot fairer than other Speakers.

Government members may have some suspicions as to Mr Powell's motives for being a bit fairer to ordinary members of Parliament, whether it be members of the Opposition, members of the Liberal Party or back-benchers. They may have their suspicions why he has been tougher with some interjections from Ministers and their long, rambling statements. They may be a bit suspicious as to why he had the cheek to treat Government members and Opposition members equally. We do not care about their factional problems; we know that this Parliament received a better deal from that Speaker. That is why it would be foolish for Opposition members to try to be part of any plot or conspiracy that would remove him from the chair.

We do not care about the Government's factional problems. Unfortunately, its factional problems are now impacting on the Parliament. Those factional problems and the long-time grudge that the Premier has against Mr Powell are now being used to replace a Speaker who was independent of any party, both for political and for personal reasons, with somebody who was a Bjelke-Petersen Speaker and who, I think, is acknowledged as somebody who was a lot tougher on the Opposition and the Liberal Party than was necessary. I am sorry to have to say that. If and when the Government gets its way and the member for Fassifern is elected to the chair, Opposition members will do their best to co-operate with him. Frankly, we are wary of what is coming our way and wary of what Government members will do to this Parliament, because we have seen it before. This is not the time to do what they are doing to this Parliament. In any other circumstances I would appeal to the Premier to pull back, but I know that he will not, because I know that he is determined to get his way, to get the National Party's way and to assert the ascendancy of the National Party over Parliament—to assert the ascendancy of the Executive over Parliament; in effect, to assert institutionalised corruption and cronyism over the Parliament.

**Mr INNES (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.52 p.m.):** On behalf of the Liberal Party, I second the nomination of the member for Isis, Mr Lin Powell. Let us deal with this issue of conspiracy. First of all, I absolutely deny it. I say that the assertion of it is a lie. A conspiracy has to be an agreement to commit an offence. Who committed the offence? Who knew what the Premier would do to the Constitution and the precedents of this House today? The offence was the Premier not endorsing the recommendation of the Speaker. That was the offence for which the National and Liberal Parties in the Federal House condemned the Labor Party in relation to Speaker Cope.

**Mr Austin:** Have a look at Spencer Jolly tonight and see who did the deal.

**Mr INNES:** There he is—mastermind; the man with the bald pate. I will get around to him shortly.

The reality is that, by refusing to endorse the recommendation of the Speaker, the Premier caused the division in the House. I have not been unduly concerned about the

details of the allegation made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Before today, I would have tended to prefer Mr Ahern's version of events in relation to the allegation.

A serious allegation has been made, which Mr Speaker wanted referred to a committee of this House. Five of the nine members of that committee are National Party members, namely, Mr FitzGerald, the Government Whip, Mr Gately, Mr Hinton, Mr McPhie and Mr Stoneman. The other four members include Mr Lickiss, the member for Moggill.

As to a solemn committee of this House such as the Privileges Committee—on no occasion will the Liberal Party direct one of its members to vote, nor will any Liberal Party member be expected to vote, in a partisan way. The Liberal Party will consider allegations fairly and dispassionately.

Sometimes an allegation will involve the Premier of this State. I have made no judgments on whatever the allegation was, but reference was made to it—as was the right of the Speaker. I have taken no part in the debate and have made no comment on the allegations and counter-allegations. The proper place for the matter to be resolved is not with the Premier personally but with the Privileges Committee. A proper recommendation was made. The Liberal Party doubts the Premier's sanity in not endorsing the reference to the committee. The Premier has the numbers and the fair forum. How could we predict what the Premier would do?

I object to the Premier converting his parliamentary sins into wild allegations about other people being involved in a conspiracy. I did not know how the Premier was going to vote. I believed that the Premier, as a genuine conservative, would support the recommendation to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee. What does he have to lose from the judgment of his peers?

Today, in this House, the Premier told lies in an attempt to hide his own embarrassment following the backfiring of stupid parliamentary tactics as well as a complete breach of precedent and the authority of the House. The Premier started off by waving the Fitzgerald report. One does not simply wave a bound document; one opens it and reads it.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Listen to the chorus! If Government members put their brains into gear with their mouths occasionally they might gain some benefit from reflection and second-guessing. They never do. They are constantly led astray by people who are so complacent with authority that they have forgotten the right reflexes in a difficult situation. It is power at any price, even touching upon the Premier.

The Fitzgerald report, which was a reference in relation to corruption, surprisingly went further. It went right back over the whole scene in Queensland—right back to bedrock. One of its most surprising and important recommendations was that the authority of Parliament must be restored. The Fitzgerald report talks about an Executive—a Cabinet that has become too involved in the hurly-burly and the actual detail of who gets what. It condemns clearly the practice of the Premier making decisions as to who will and will not be enriched, as opposed to setting down policy guide-lines for other people to administer fairly and objectively. The Fitzgerald report condemns the secrecy and the modification of the climate of opinions in which reflection and change of attitude can be achieved by a warped media and an armoury of press secretaries.

**Mrs Nelson interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** I ask the honourable member to read the report. If she occasionally opened her eyes as widely as she opens her mouth, she might comprehend some of the problems.

The reality is that the Fitzgerald report says—

“Parliament can easily be prevented from properly performing its role by being denied time and resources.”

It talks about "mechanisms such as an impartial Speaker." Honourable members have seen the Speaker exercise some impartial authority completely within his constitutional rights and the practices of the House.

As I have said, the National Party condemned the Labor Party for failing to support Speaker Cope, and so did my party. However, the Premier cannot change the rules when the flames are applied to him. If Mr Ahern is in no trouble there is no danger of a reference to a committee where he has the numbers and will be supported by my member in the case of any just cause. I make no reflection on the members of the Labor Party. The practice of the House generally is that committees work together and try to work honestly and fairly on matters affecting members.

When the matter is taken out of this bear pit and into a small room to be discussed by members of different parties, there will be some constructive co-operation, but there must be more of it than has occurred in the past. Mr Fitzgerald said that there must be more co-operation. We should put trust in our institutions and not always in the blindness of our vote. The Government should put its trust in the committees, particularly when it has the numbers, and it should not accuse anybody else of being involved in a conspiracy when it has committed the crime. It is hoped that the Government will not commit the crimes. The Liberal Party would not have anticipated that the Government would have voted on that issue in the way it did. When Mr FitzGerald was looked to, he should have risen and moved a motion, and Government members should have supported the Speaker's recommendation.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Let me respond to the fishwives' chorus from the back bench. I have never had any problem with the spectre of the former Premier. I had more fights with him than did any Government members. I say, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's." When he was wrong he should have been told. Government members failed to tell him when he was wrong.

On the occasion when the previous Speaker was elected, in my contribution I made reference to some of the shenanigans that were occurring at the time. Members opposite will recall that it was not long after the time that they had all pulled on their T-shirts in the "Joh for PM" campaign. The reason Joh went was not related to a massive jump in history; it was that the polls collapsed. However, notwithstanding the fact that he was sacked, because a sufficient number of people on the back bench of the National Party were loyal to the memory of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Speaker Powell was elected. The Liberal Party did not give this House Speaker Powell; it nominated someone else. The National Party gave us Speaker Powell. In fact, at the time of his election as Speaker, I made statements of reservation. I said there were some aspects of his policy and political stances that worried me. I said that Mr Lingard had done a fair job.

I say today, looking at it from the position of a back-bench member of Parliament, that Mr Powell has done a better job. He has been prepared to show a sort of independence to both sides of this House. More Labor members than Government members have been "gated", or sent out. It will be noted that no Liberal members were sent out, because they studiously respect and observe the Standing Orders. We support the Chair, and we continue to support the Chair. That is why we are supporting the Chair today.

It was the National Party that gave us Speaker Powell, against the wish of the Premier. At the time of his election as Speaker I made these comments—

"After a week of leadership of the parliamentary National Party by Mr Ahern, he has had to step back into the mire to get a better view of his vision of excellence.

. . .

Threats, lies and disinformation have been orchestrated from the bunker. The strategy committee has emerged."

It will be recalled that that is the strategy committee that handled the demise of Bjelke-Petersen and the attempt to get constitutional government for the Premier, Mr Ahern.

I said that we should consider the strategy committee. I referred to Mr Clauson, the new boy on the block, and said that at least I would give him credit because he was assisted by two persons “who know more about political treachery than anybody else in this State, namely, Messrs Lane and Austin”. I continued—

“Mr Lane has emerged as Mr Ahern’s chief numbers man. Following the election that was held last night in the party room, was it not Mr Lane who went across to Mr Powell and upbraided him for standing and winning? Mr Lane is a weather-vane. All fence-jumpers have to be. They have to be as closely attached as they can possibly be to the new source of power from which comes their protection and advancement. Mr Austin attached himself to Sir Robert.”

So, he was most closely in contact with the person at the top of the pre-selection process from which came his security.

It was all the way with Joh until the winds of change; until the disastrous slump in the Gallup poll and, shock and horror, “whoompah!” the National Party leaped for a change in course. It was nothing to do with principle. That became the excuse. That became the new-found creed. That was the creed that was not there when the Liberal Party stood up for things such as public accounts committees; when it opposed the politicisation of the judiciary.

Mr Goss made reference to Sir Walter Campbell. I think Sir Walter Campbell was a great Chief Justice. I was his first associate. Yet in the constitutional wrangle that occurred, I supported Mr Justice Douglas’ nomination and I supported the removal, absence and prevention of politicisation of the judiciary.

Where did that take us? Are there not echoes and ripples of the politicisation of the judiciary running through the Fitzgerald report? If such things had not occurred, I suspect that some of what is referred to in this report would not have happened.

The Government had to be into everything. The Liberal Party opposed the promotion of Sir Edward Lyons, whose influence has bedevilled the National Party and this State for a decade. Today the National Party has spoken about a conspiracy with Sir Edward Lyons. I have had nothing to do with him. I have said in this House—and I will always say it—that he is one of the most evil influences in this State. He is conniving and malicious, a man of little competence. I have always said that. Now it is being said by the National Party.

When Vic Sullivan was Deputy Leader of the National Party, I remember being in his office on the 23rd floor of the Parliamentary Annexe with a room full of Nats. Ted Lyons knew that I could not stand a bar of him. He came into the room. We were sitting on a crowded lounge and Ted Lyons deliberately sat down in such a position that somebody had to move over. I was in the corner of the lounge. With his little, thin hands he took me by the arm and he said, “Never forget, Angus, everybody needs friends.” That was his message. That was the way in which he operated.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Listen to me. He never became my friend, but he was your friend.

**Mr Beard:** He’s all yours.

**Mr INNES:** Right. That is the history. There were Joh T-shirts, but when the polls went down, off with Joh. The Fitzgerald inquiry came along, off with Terry and off with Ted. Neither Terry Lewis nor Ted Lyons would ever have claimed me as his friend, because in the joint parties room when members of the Liberal Party stood for the principles that now litter this inquiry, you were not there; nor was the Premier. He wants to do the right thing, but the brutal politics of the National Party—or at least of those who have taken control of its direction in recent years—will not allow him. You people change, jump and leap. You gave us Speaker Powell, and in fact he worked out. He has been a damned good Speaker as far as the ordinary member of this Parliament

is concerned. As I recall, he has committed only one sin. I believe there is one matter that he can be questioned about.

Let us look at Mr Powell's performance. Controversy surrounded him when he sent a letter objecting to action with regard to the AIDS issue. Apparently he sent a very strong letter of protest to all Cabinet Ministers. It was revealed that the former Speaker denied that he in any way made that letter public. The allegation was made that it had been deliberately leaked from a Minister's office. That assertion was never denied. It was a Cabinet Minister who leaked the document that brought him into public controversy. I still think that he should have bought out of it and that his action was politicisation of the Speakership, although it was not started by him. Throughout the performance of Speaker Powell, that is the only significant blemish that I see in him, that is, taking his role into an area that it would have been better left outside. However, it was never denied that it was started by the leaking of a letter that he sent to the Queensland Cabinet—in particular, the Premier—relating to a matter about which he was entitled to have some feeling. Otherwise I regard him as a person who has been conspicuously fair and brave.

This morning Mr Powell started by making two statements, and all honourable members could speculate about the motive. However, the Liberal Party did not give Speaker Powell to the Parliament; the National Party gave Speaker Powell to the Parliament. He worked out, but you now complain. Because he has been independent, you now complain. That is the reality and that is why we have this debate.

More time has elapsed. The weather-vanes who still exist in the National Party are changing direction again because the polls indicate that their situation is even worse. Until they return to being directed by principle, they will get into the same type of strife as they are in now.

**A Government member interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** You are a clown.

**Mr Beard:** A good clown; a top clown.

**Mr INNES:** A harmless clown. The trouble is that it is not enough to be an amiable local member. You actually have parliamentary responsibilities and you have to use your heads and your consciences. If you know nothing about constitutional law and parliamentary procedure, you have an obligation to learn something about them.

**Mrs Gamin interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Now we have the new chum who is straight out of the head of the organisational party that has inflicted damage on the present National Party. She is one of Bob Sparkes' people. At least we do not have Bob Sparkes sitting in the gallery today. He was there last time. At that stage I made two references: I spoke about the Jandowae junta and the Gold Coast milk Mafia—the 3-H brand of Holm, Hollindale and Hinze.

**Mr Veivers:** There's nothing wrong with Hollindale. Don't say anything against Hollindale. There's nothing wrong with Hollindale.

**Mr INNES:** Two years ago——

**Mr Veivers:** Are you going to say something against him or not?

**Mr INNES:** Two years ago——

**Mr Veivers:** No. You haven't got the guts.

**Mr INNES:** Just listen. A year and a half ago, he would have said that there is nothing wrong with any of them, but now we are down to one. The point is that we are now down to one. I am showing the contrast between where you stood a year and a half ago and where you stand today. You cast off people and allegiances in the same

way as you cast off clothes, because you are not directed by principle. Until you are directed by principle, you will keep going wrong.

**Mr Beard:** They don't understand what you are talking about. They don't even understand it.

**Mr INNES:** No, they do not understand. They are not conservatives; they are constitutional vandals and anarchists because they do not know the rules.

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** Suddenly it hurts. Suddenly when we talk about your flip-flop, weather-vane support system, you are embarrassed. If we are such a happy little bunch of Mike-supporters and if we are living in such a happy, well-ordered reform State and a reformed National Party, I wonder why question No. 5 appears on the parliamentary question paper, submitted by the member for Mulgrave.

**Mr Veivers:** What a mongrel!

**Mr INNES:** Have you read it? The National Party member for Mulgrave, Mr Menzel, asks whether the phones of members of Parliament are bugged or tapped by the special branch of the Queensland police force. That is what the question says. Mr Menzel thinks that the telephones in Parliament House are bugged. He thinks that private conversations he has had are coming back to him. He believes this because evidence comes back from National Party people about National Party matters. He is not the only member; a number have made the same complaint. What a staggering situation! One of your members believes that your Government is bugging him. I simply work on the basis that my telephone is bugged and say whatever I like with gay abandon. In fact, if I really think that they are listening, I double the ante. I have more reason to be paranoid than most people.

**An honourable member interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** No, I am not talking about Mr White; I am talking about the special branch.

One of the things that I have discovered about the National Party is that, if it is a toss-up between the National Party and the police force, the police force comes down on my side. Thank God an honest special branch policeman was asked by the National Party side of the coalition to get political dirt on me. He was an honest policeman who refused to get dirt on me. Thank God it was not one of the other policemen who might have tried to get some dirt on me, Peter White and Bruce Bishop. I will remind honourable members what the political dirt was all about because some honourable members were not in this House. Peter White and Bruce Bishop were investigated by the special branch of the police force because they raised the matter of land scandals involving a shopping centre rezoning in the Gold Coast area. This did not happen in the mid-1980s; it was back in 1978 or 1979. The investigation into my background occurred in 1980.

**Mr Sherrin interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** No, the Police Minister orders that.

I had the audacity to stand up several times during the course of the year and talk about matters such as accountability and the unlimited powers being given to the police through legislation; terrible, anarchistic, revolutionary matters such as that. Thank God there are some honest policemen. I have little to thank National Party Ministers for.

**Mr McPhie interjected.**

**Mr INNES:** They actually went to the Northern Territory and, if the honourable member looks at the affidavit that was tendered, he will see that it states that I was an outstanding police officer. I am pleased that the honourable member for Toowoomba

North has interjected, because he is a former officer of the Royal Australian Air Force. No doubt, in the interests of the safety of this country, he was security classified to a significant extent, is that right?

**Mr McPhie:** You'd know.

**Mr INNES:** I know, because I was also in the Royal Australian Air Force active reserve. At the time the special branch checked me out, like Sandy McPhie I was a wing commander in the active reserve and a judge advocate for the State of Queensland. At a time when I was security classified for my country I was not good enough for the Queensland Parliament. When Peter White was a former commanding officer of one of the Australian infantry battalions in Vietnam and a holder of the Military Cross he was checked out by the Queensland special branch. How unbelievable! It was nothing to do with the genuine security of the nation; it was all about using the police for political purposes.

I thank Mr Fitzgerald for abolishing the special branch, notwithstanding my respect for individual members of that branch, including the fine, honest member who carried out the check on me. However, I would point to Mr Lane as falling into the other category. Heaven only knows what would have happened if Lane had been asked to check me out.

The allegations made by the Premier in this House today are outrageous, because the crime which has been committed has been committed by his party by not following the Speaker's ruling. He did not tell me how he would vote at all, and five minutes before——

**Mrs Nelson** interjected.

**Mr INNES:** The honourable member for Aspley saw it as she walked in. Goss spoke to me and said, "Are you prepared to second the motion that Powell be Speaker?" I said, "Yes", because, irrespective of politics, the Liberal Party will support someone who, both today and in the past, has demonstrably done the right thing as Speaker of this House. The Liberal Party will not walk away from the issue because of some crazy, stupid, paranoid, party-type grounds. I will fight Goss and the rest of the Labor Party on the issues at the election.

**Mr Sherrin** interjected.

**Mr INNES:** Yes, and I am doing it well. The Liberal Party increased by 5 per cent and they decreased by 5 per cent. That is the way to fight them.

The Liberal Party will not prostitute the proceedings of this House for cheap political gains. This report calls upon members of Parliament to work together to clean up this State. The report proposes the formation of all-party committees to supervise the reconstruction, regeneration and cleansing of Queensland. Until members of Parliament start to work together, follow some proper principles and get away from this asinine instinct against people simply because they have a different political label, this State will never be cleaned up.

Look at the way that the debate has progressed. What must it be like to be a young member of the Queensland police force hoping desperately for the restoration of respect in his job and career who is witnessing this political bun-fight on the release of the report? Nothing has been addressed that will assist towards the rebuilding of the police force, the restoration of its confidence or the removal of corruption. The only thing that has happened is a bun-fight of counter-allegations. Today when the debate of this report should have begun, the failure of the National Party Government to observe the traditional independence of the Speaker, which is specifically mentioned by Tony Fitzgerald, has caused this disgraceful new precedent in this State's history. This Government keeps on making constitutional history because it keeps on defying tradition.

The Liberal Party supports Mr Powell's nomination to the position of Speaker and will be happy to serve under him until the end of this Parliament.

**Hon. I. J. GIBBS** (Albert—Minister for Health) (5.22 p.m.): It gives me no great pleasure to speak in this debate today, because this House should really be debating the Fitzgerald report prepared by the chairman of the inquiry, Mr Tony Fitzgerald.

Recently members were whinging that they would not be given enough time to debate the report and that seven minutes per person was not enough. Now the time of the House is being wasted because of a conspiracy between the opposition parties—the Labor Party and Liberal Party—in coalition with the ex-Speaker, the Independent member for Isis, Mr Lin Powell.

It is a pity that we are not debating the very thing for which Parliament was called together at great expense, that is, the Fitzgerald report. In a premeditated conspiracy that the Speaker cooked up with the Opposition, he resigned. He did that in much the same way as he walked out of that chair during the debate on Angelo Vasta, when he disappeared out of this place just like Bill Hewitt did when he disappeared into the toilet. I see that the former Speaker is shaking his head. He could plead otherwise on the Bible but I would not believe him, and no-one else would, either.

It is interesting that the former Speaker was nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and seconded by the Leader of the Liberal Party. That is further proof of a conspiracy. One would think that, if a man had the intestinal fortitude today to resign, he would have got right out of the place and kept out of political life. He has no place in here now; he has had it. To me, he is history. I am quite sure that the numbers in this place will ensure that he has had it.

Quite sadly, I stand here today not debating the Fitzgerald report but debating what, in the circumstances, is a stupidity that has come about through a conspiracy between some groups of people and has been backed by some people who are watching these proceedings on television. No credit goes to them, either. I know that eventually everything will be documented and made public, just as everything in politics is. That is what happened with the Beattie meeting in the cow yard at Kingaroy.

Today is a sad day, but I am pleased that Kev Lingard has been nominated by the Government and that he will be in that chair in the near future. The two opposition parties have been led—or misled—by the member for Isis, the former Speaker and former member of the National Party, Lin Powell. Based on his behaviour since becoming Speaker, he does not deserve to be in this place today.

I will turn to the leadership of the two opposition parties, the Liberal Party, led by that long fellow over there, Angus Innes, and the Labor Party, led by Wayne Goss. Politically, those two men today have set themselves back 10 years. They have done themselves more damage than anyone else could have done to them. There is no doubt that that damage is self-inflicted. I am quite sure that some of the old hands in the Liberal Party would be ashamed of their leader's actions. They would not have copped this; they would not have got down into the gutter to bring about what is happening today. I know that the johnny-come-latelies do not realise what is happening. They have not "been there, done that".

What has happened has been a premeditated, secret deal led by that man Powell, who is full of hate. Because his insides are eating him up, he is out of control of himself. I have known Lin Powell since 1974. We entered this place together. He is a man with great principles and great standards that I always admired. However, a man who is eating himself up with hate is no longer in charge of himself. As a result, he has done things that he would not normally do.

Up until today Lin Powell was the Speaker because I helped to get him there. An hour or less before the party meeting at which the ballot was held, he rang me and said that he intended to nominate for the position. I ask him now to acknowledge if that is right. I said that I would back him and I got him enough votes to get him the nomination. In this place everyone is allowed one mistake. I have been here 15 years and that is the greatest mistake I ever made. I say that based on his behaviour since he became Speaker.

He held that position for not more than five minutes when he altered the allocation of accommodation in this place. He walked over people with big, hobnailed boots.

**Opposition members:** You lost your bedroom. That is what you are worried about.

**Mr I. J. GIBBS:** I did not mind at all. That did not worry me but it reflects the behaviour of the man in this place since that time.

Since then, in that Speaker's room he has built up his hatred for Mike Ahern. In his hate for Mike Ahern, he has tried to take all his mates with him. For that, he stands condemned. Today, I do not dislike the man, I feel sorry for him. I believe he is a man of great principle who, by his own hand and his own actions, has sunk into the gutter.

On this very sad day in the political world, he has lost all respect from me. He has wiped himself out by his own hand. I do not hate him, I feel sorry for him, because I saw a man who was very close to both of us eat himself up with hate, a man who lost his wisdom and his gut-feeling judgment. He was a great man who led this State for 20 years; I watched him destroy himself. Lin Powell has done the same thing to himself. Today he is in exactly the same position. Lin Powell, who is eaten up with hate, has destroyed himself politically and lost the respect of those in this Chamber and the people of Queensland, who do not deserve to have dished up to them what he did in concert with the two opposition parties. I hope that he soon leaves this place so he can get the hate out of his gut and enjoy himself instead of making a nuisance of himself here. Today he stands condemned. I feel sad to be in this place today debating this motion when we should be debating the Fitzgerald report.

**Mr BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 p.m.): Mr Gibbs has just demonstrated in this Parliament what the National Party is all about. Because Speaker Powell was independent in the chair and gave members on both sides of the House a fair go, the National Party hates him. The strongest complaint that Mr Gibbs had was that he lost his bedroom. The strongest complaint that most Government members have is that at some stage the Speaker might suggest that they will not be able to read their speeches or their answers to the Dorothy Dixers. They might have to stand in the Parliament and talk about the issue being debated. Most of them could not do it. This morning, when the Speaker suggested that he would not allow the reading of speeches, he lost the vote. Because they could not use the speeches written by their press secretaries, Government members were concerned. At present, half of them cannot speak in the Parliament because they are waiting for the Ministers to hand them their briefs so that they know what to say.

Kev Lingard will be back as Speaker and he will tell us to wear suits, allow Government members to read speeches and give Mr Gibbs his bedroom back. That will be his contribution to the Parliament.

In the 17 years that I have been in Parliament, Speaker Powell has been the only independent Speaker. I give him credit for that. I make no bones about it; I have not got on with any of the Speakers in this place. All honourable members would have noticed that. However, I give Mr Powell credit for attempting to be fair in many cases.

I turn to Tony Fitzgerald's report about the Parliament. It is fitting that the National Party used its numbers to dump the Speaker on the day that the Fitzgerald report was to be debated. In his report, Mr Fitzgerald states—

“Any Government may use its dominance in the Parliament and its control of public resources to stifle and neuter effective criticism by the Opposition.

This can be prevented by mechanisms such as an impartial Speaker. Because of its necessary numerical strength, the Government in a parliamentary democracy is obviously able to change or ignore the rules.”

That has been occurring in Queensland for 17 years. The report continues—

“In these circumstances the authority and neutrality of the ‘referee’ is of critical importance. The Speaker cannot afford to adopt a partisan role . . .”

At page 332, under the heading "10.7.4 Lies", the report states—

"Lies told to Parliament concerning matters into which it is inquiring and lies told by public officials about matters pertinent to their office are not of themselves criminal offences. The former may be contempt of Parliament . . . Each constitutes an impediment to proper investigation of public affairs. . . . the obligation of all to be accountable in respect of public affairs should be reinforced by the prescription of criminal offences constituted by:

- the holder of any public office lying in connection with that office;
- any person lying to Parliament in respect of any matter relating to personal conduct . . ."

That is what the matter is all about. I caught the Premier lying. He is a proven liar. Today, he admits to being a liar, because he says, "I am not game to have anyone look at my record on this matter. I am not game to have seven or nine members of the Parliament judge me on the evidence before the Privileges Committee. I am not game to have a committee dominated by five members of my own party judge me on this issue." The issue is my allegation that he lied to the Parliament.

In a letter to the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament dated 16 June 1989, I stated—

"In the Queensland Parliament on Thursday, 8th June, 1989, I asked a Question Without Notice of the Premier.

The Hansard Proofs recorded my question and the Premier's answer as follows:

Mr. Burns: I ask the Premier: without consulting the then Education Minister, Mr. Powell, did he as Health Minister encourage the homosexual lobby to make a public issue of an Aids Education Program in schools, or did he ever instruct his staff to initiate such actions?

Mr. Ahern: The answer to the honourable member's question is 'No'."

When the Premier made that reply, he and his mates laughed. The letter continued—

"As I understand rulings from a succession of Speakers in the Queensland Parliament and throughout the Westminster System a Minister does not have to answer a question but it is contempt of Parliament to deliberately mislead the House.

I attach hereto a copy of Education Department Instruction 87.8.2. AIDS Education in Secondary Schools. A note to Mr. Ahern is typed in the margin. This note is signed by Bill Rutkin the Queensland AIDS Council President. It reads:

'Mr. Ahern: One Brisbane headmaster has confiscated a video copy of the Quantum program on AIDS being shown to a grade 12 Science class as a result of this instruction. President of the P & C rang most upset.'

Mr. Rutkin when questioned by the Courier Mail's Tony Koch confirmed he had written the note to Mr. Ahern and that Mr. McKechnie"—

Mr Ahern's press secretary—

"had been back in contact with him, advising him to make a 'public issue'.

I attach hereto a memo dated 25th May, 1987 from Mike Ahern to his then Press Secretary Jock McKechnie. It reads:

'In respect of this matter, it might be very carefully suggested to Bill Rutkin that he might make a public issue of this memorandum, being careful to leave our name out of it altogether.'

A Minister of the National Party is being far from loyal to another ministerial colleague, the Minister for Education. He did not go to him and say, "Let's sort this out. I've got a letter from the AIDS council complaining about this instruction you have given." He said to his press officer, "Go and get the AIDS people and the homosexual lobby to stir up some trouble, but don't let our name be associated with it." That is a

dirty, low trick. When he gets down to that level, he could not claim that he does not remember it. When I asked him a question about it, he could not claim that he did not remember it.

My letter to the Speaker continued—

“The Premier has reconciled his answer to the Parliament and this memorandum by claiming that he consulted with you on the matter.

I note your explicit denial published in the *Courier-Mail*—

and I watched him on TV—

“of 15th June that Mr. Ahern consulted with you on the specific matter about which I questioned him in Parliament.

If such consultation did not occur, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Ahern deliberately misled the Parliament on 8th June, 1989.

Your urgent consideration of this most important question of Parliamentary Privilege would be appreciated.”

This morning, the Speaker did what I expected him to do. He asked that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee. Someone said that it was a stunt. However, the Premier was involved in referring Kevin Hooper to the Privileges Committee in the days when he was stirring up trouble about all the matters that Mr Fitzgerald has been investigating. In those days, the National Party was not behind the door in using the Privileges Committee to investigate Hooper. In fact, Mr Hinze and the National Party referred my leader, Wayne Goss, to the Privileges Committee of this Parliament. Government members maintain that it is all right for the Government to refer people to the Privileges Committee for investigation, but it is wrong for Opposition members to ask their peers in the Parliament to judge whether the Premier is a liar.

Mike Ahern is the man who was prepared to have Hooper tried by the Privileges Committee when Hooper was raising matters about the dirty, rotten, stinking events that were occurring under the corrupt National Party Government of the day. He is the man who was prepared to let Hinze—who will probably end up in gaol and deserves to be there—use this Parliament and the Privileges Committee to try to stop Wayne Goss raising matters that have since been proven to be true.

Why does the Premier not want the matter that I raised referred to the Privileges Committee? It is because he is afraid of being shown to be the liar that he is on the issue. He is afraid of being shown to be the villain that he is. He is a villain. He turned and said to his press secretary, “Let’s stir up some trouble in the media for one of my own ministerial colleagues but don’t let on that we did it. Do it behind his back. Do it in a dirty, underhanded fashion.” That was what Mike Ahern put in a memo to his press secretary—a memo that he did not deny. Over the following couple of days, when I raised the issue in the media because the Parliament was no longer sitting, first of all he said that he had consulted with Powell, and Powell said straight off that that was not true. An article in the *Courier-Mail* of 14 June stated—

“Mr Ahern yesterday confirmed that as Health Minister in 1987 he had encouraged homosexual lobby groups to make a public issue of AIDS videos in schools.”

So he did not deny it. The article continued—

“However, he denied he had done so without prior consultation with Mr Powell. Therefore, he said, he had not misled Parliament. . .”

Mr Powell appeared on television and stated that he had not been consulted on that issue. Mr Powell told the *Courier-Mail* that he had not been consulted on that issue. Then Mr Ahern started to say, “Oh, look, I was misled by the homosexual lobby story.” However, Mr Rutkin is reported as saying—

“As AIDS council president I restrict my comments to matters relating to AIDS. There is the Queensland Association for Gay Law Reform which speaks for

'gays'. I am a member—most thinking 'gays' are. This organisation now speaks on law reforms."

So do not let us say that Rutkin is not a leading member of the homosexual lobby, which is lobbying for law reform and for changes to instructions to the Education Department.

Whether one supports that group or not is not the issue. The issue is that I asked a question of the Minister in this Parliament and he lied. He lied deliberately. The facts show that he lied. Then when I asked for the matter to be referred to the Privileges Committee—from which he would have got a slight slap over the wrist—the Government used that as an excuse today to sack Powell. The reason that the Government used that excuse to sack Powell is very simple. This Government is running scared because of what might happen as a result of the Fitzgerald report. The Government will be able to put in its man, who will restrict debate.

Mr Lingard used to rule matters sub judice at the drop of a hat. It was like a day at the football in this Parliament. Every time someone blew the whistle, Mr Lingard said, "Sub judice". Every time a member of the Opposition raised a matter, Mr Lingard said, "Oh, sub judice." Honourable members could not debate anything, and it is going to come back to that. The Government is going to recycle Mr Lingard. "Sub judice" Lingard will be making the same rulings. What the Government will do is charge a couple of fellows as a result of matters arising out of the Fitzgerald report and say that it cannot be debated.

Members of the Government are saying today, "Oh, look, you blokes are taking up the time of the House. We've only allowed eight hours for the debate on the whole of the \$24m report, and you're taking up that time." What is wrong with next week, the week after, the week after and the week after? The Government does not want this Parliament to sit because if it did, someone might ask a question. Someone might ask a question about the Government's operations in this place. Someone might ask "Chainsaw Mike" how he can parade himself as a greenie today. Someone might ask a question about some of these new-found interests in the National Party now that an election is due.

**Mr Beard:** Mrs Nelson reckons "Top Level Ted" is using you.

**Mr BURNS:** "Top Level Ted" had a field day with them.

Today some people argue that the Ministers in those days were to blame. All of the members of the National Party were to blame. Every single member——

**A Government member interjected.**

**Mr BURNS:** You too, fatty. The honourable member was in this Parliament last year when Ahern rorted the Public Accounts Committee. Fitzgerald said that. It is a matter of record. He said what Deane Wells and other members of the Opposition said at the time. The Government was imposing restrictions and giving Ministers a cop-out.

Things have not changed. The honourable member for Aspley, who is making a noise, ratted on the Liberal Party. Now she is a member of the National Party. Everybody tells me that she is trying to get back with the Liberals because the Nationals are going bad. She does not know where she is going to be next. But she voted in this place for all of the things that honourable members are talking about. Not once did she go into the joint parties room and say, "I am concerned about what Kevin Hooper is saying about corruption. I am concerned about the matters that are being raised by Wayne Goss and other members of the Opposition."

Not once did any National Party member stand up and be counted. They did not have the guts to be counted on the issue, because they were part of it. The money that was being paid into Kaldeal and the money that was coming in from Citra was going into the campaign of members like the member for Aspley. The big money that the Government spent in the Aspley electorate at the last election came from corruption.

The money that was spent in the Mansfield electorate to get the little fellow from Mansfield elected came from corruption. In 1986 the National Party said, "We want a lot of money", and in 1983 it said, "We want a lot of money", and Joh went out and got it. Joh went out and raised \$800,000 corruptly in the community. There were hospital rorts and railway rorts. Land was given away and there were Japanese sell-outs. I wonder how many Iwasaki yen went into the campaign to have members of this Government elected? They all loved it. They all took the money and they all spent it. They were all returned thanks to that money, and now they want to say, "It was Russ Hinze and Joh. It wasn't us. We didn't do it. It was somebody else." It is always somebody else.

The Government will make a scapegoat of Lewis and it will make a scapegoat of Hinze. To be truthful, I do not know where the Government will find a cell that will fit Hinze. It must be refitting the gaol. However, they will go to gaol, and a lot of members of this Government should go with them because they could only get away with what they did because the members of this Government let them get away with it. They could only get away with it because the wimps were in control.

Poor old Mike Ahern. I like the way Mike Ahern performs on television. He says, "You've got to give me brownie points for courage. I'm game. I'm a fighter. I'm tough." When I was a lad, I used to knock around a bit. That involved a bit of fighting and so on. If there was going to be a brawl, the fellow who said he was tough was the one you would fight first. He was always the easiest one. If a bloke kept telling you how tough he was, you said, "He's mine. You have that other bloke. He's quiet. He might knock me down. But not the old toughie." Mike Ahern appears on television every night saying, "You've got to give me 10 brownie points. I'm fair dinkum. I'm fighting. Give me points for courage. Look what I've done." What has he done? As soon as Robert Sparkes said, "We're going to have the gerrymander continue", he said, "Well, I'll back down."

He said, "We will have a committee of inquiry in six weeks' time. It will take longer than the period before the election, so we cannot have a redistribution before the election." After the election, Government members will say, "We were returned with a majority after Fitzgerald and all. We have a mandate to govern. We can do what we like now." That will be their argument. I have heard it for 17 years in this place. I have seen Government members dance the gerrymander tune and the corruption tune. I was here when a little lad put in a statutory declaration against Mike Ahern. No, it was against Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Just the same, Mike is just another colourless version of old Joh or a skinnier version of him. The lad put in that statutory declaration to say that he had been ordered to use Joh's equipment and that of others in one of the coal deals. Honourable members will remember Mr Bob Hope, who received the very fancy deal with the Port of Brisbane Authority. He got the green light for a marina. That young bloke put his life on the line and signed a statutory declaration in which he stated, "I was told by Bob Hope against the best interests of the company to use Joh Bjelke-Petersen's and Black's equipment—the drilling rig." The Liberal and National Parties of the day stood behind Joh the liar and crucified the person to whom I have referred. They crucified many policemen who stood up during all those years and said that things were corrupt in this State.

Tony Elliott was there, as were Tony FitzGerald and other Government members, including Mr Muntz. All of them did nothing to support those decent coppers who stood up for decency in this State. They did nothing at all to support the businessmen who were complaining about the corrupt practices in tendering. Not once did they stand up to that. Not once did they sound a note of warning. Not once did we hear them say anything at all, except, "Thanks, Joh. Give me a bit more of the corrupt money. I want to spend it in my electorate. Look after me, Joh. I want to be in your Cabinet, Joh."—"Kiss-his-bottom Joh". They said, "I want to be a member of Cabinet. I want to be on your side. Give me a shiny car; give me a ministerial job; give me an overseas trip. Look after me, Joh." Year in and year out in this place, that is what it was all about.

Now, all of a sudden they are saying, "It's Joh's fault—Joh alone." They are saying that it is not their fault. Never in their lives did they stand up or were they accountable

on any of these issues. Today, when the Fitzgerald report is to be debated in this place, they said, "Here is an opportunity to squash the Speaker out and to get rid of an Independent." Mr Powell is the only Independent in this place. Government members know that Mr Powell is angry with Mike Ahern and that he will stand on an issue and demand that it be investigated, because he is involved. Mike Ahern said that Mr Powell is a liar. Ahern said, "I consulted with him." However, Powell said that he did not. That matter should be resolved. The Premier and the Speaker of the Parliament had taken different stands on the simple issue of a question in the Parliament. The issue should have been resolved in the normal parliamentary way. However, that is not the National Party way; it is not the jackboot way. The Government knocked down in this place the people who were demonstrating and marching in the streets. In those days, if the Government had guns and an army, it would have done to us what was done to the kids in Beijing. It would have done to Anne Warner and those people who were marching——

**Mrs Nelson** interjected.

**Mr BURNS:** Of course you would have. Never did you stand up for the people who were marching in the streets. Never did you stand up for the Christians who were singing in the square and who were arrested. Never did you stand up on that issue alone.

When the little girl was belted on the head by that inspector of police with the night stick, the incident was shown on television so that everyone could see it. Old Joh refused to let the police investigate that complaint and Government members did nothing about it.

**Mr Hamill:** I was there. I saw what happened.

**Mr BURNS:** The honourable member is right. It all happened at that time. These people who were part and parcel of the Liberal and National Parties at that time let Joh carry the can for it. They will carry that to their graves because I will not let them forget it.

When the debate on the Fitzgerald report takes place tomorrow, we will not be able to say half these things because we will have the Government's Speaker in the House and be subjected to the Government's rules. For the first 15 years that I was a member of this place, when the National Party snapped its fingers the Speaker jumped in the air. It was like an electric charge under the Speaker's seat. Up the Speaker popped and said, "123A." If a member said, "I'm not copping that", the Speaker would say, "I call on the Premier", and a member was suspended from the House for seven or 14 days. I think that one day I was suspended for 21 days. It was not even in the good fishing season, so honourable members should not give me that rubbish that I was being thrown out because the fishing season was good.

**Mr Elliott:** Tell us the truth. You like to go fishing occasionally.

**Mr BURNS:** The plain fact about you, old fellow, is that you are like the Government's nominee for the position of Speaker—you are a failed Cabinet Minister. You were rejected by your own party. The Government's nominee was a poor Speaker and one of the shortest-serving Cabinet Ministers. Now we have to cop him back.

**Mr Austin** interjected.

**Mr BURNS:** Here he is, the old cattle-duffer. He has a word or two to say.

Today, the Government suggested that somewhere along the line Opposition members were in some sort of coalition or cahoots. We had about five members missing and we had the worst turn-up of our people for some time. So we were really smart mugs, weren't we? We worked it all out——

**Mrs Nelson:** Three of them are here now.

**Mr BURNS:** Three of them are not here. We only had five missing this morning. Three are not here. Look, I hope that the honourable member never gets to teach kids at school, because she cannot add up two and three to make five. I am holding up five fingers. Three of them are away. How many have I got left? The honourable member must have been in charge of the redistribution and the counting of the votes with Don Lane. I point out to the honourable member that it leaves two. No matter how one looks at it, that is two. Even the bloke opposite me is one; and I am holding up two fingers.

Government members cannot blame anyone other than the National Party for the planned tactic today. The planned tactic was to destroy Powell, and they have done it. He played into the Government's hands because he was not going to cop it. He stuck to his principles. When he did that, the Government said, "Now we have a man standing on principle, we will squash him." The Government has done that for the last 30 years in this place. For 30 years, every businessman, every policeman and every decent citizen who stood on principle on any issue was squashed by this National Party. They will be squashed again when the National Party gets hold of the numbers in this Parliament and tries to use them in the next week.

**Mr Underwood:** What about Ted Row? Why wasn't he nominated by them?

**Mr BURNS:** They always bypass Teddy Row. I must say that I do not think that he knows the Standing Orders very well, but at least he has served his apprenticeship in here.

When the Government brought in Kevin Lingard, he had hardly been in this place for any length of time. At least Speaker Powell knew the rules. Lingard did not know where the rule book was. In fact, someone had to tell him where the Speaker's office was. That is how little time he had spent in this place. He is probably outside trying on his wig at present, as soon as they can kill another sheep.

As far as I am concerned, Speaker Powell was the best thing that has happened to this Parliament in many, many years. It is a slight on Fitzgerald and everything that we hold dear as parliamentarians when the Government says that it can use its numbers to get rid of Mr Powell on this false, trumped-up idea.

**An honourable member interjected.**

**Mr BURNS:** It is false and trumped up.

The Government had the opportunity to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee. At a later stage, the matter could have come back to this House for another vote, when the Government could have used its numbers. However, because that would have been too fair and reasonable and is not the National Party's way, the Government did not go along with the normal process of parliamentary democracy. The people of this State know that and have seen it. It is Mike Ahern's way; Mike the wimp's way. The Premier has decided to squash out any Government members who are prepared to be independent and to stand up for what they believe in. That is the trouble with this Government. Its members are automatic voters who could be replaced by a set of buttons and little machines. At the press of a button, up would come a vote.

I intend to vote for Mr Powell. If it is possible to hold a real secret ballot in this House, some Government members should vote for Mr Powell because he stood on principle and showed them the way that they should go in the future.

Sitting suspended from 5.54 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr BRADDY (Rockhampton) (7.30 p.m.):** This debate has arisen out of the obsession of the Premier of this State to earn himself rewards and brownie points as a result of his childish immature conduct with which we Queensland people have been visited in the last couple of days. It is quite extraordinary how immature the conduct of the Queensland Premier and the National Party Government in this State has been.

Of course, we have to look at the quite extraordinary circumstances which arose. Only this week the Fitzgerald report was presented. That report contains language which tells this Government that above all else it had to reinforce and buttress the institution of Parliament. Page 123 of the report contains the following remarks—

“Any Government may use its dominance in the Parliament and its control of public resources to stifle and neuter effective criticism by the Opposition.

This can be prevented by mechanisms such as an impartial Speaker. Because of its necessary numerical strength, the Government in a parliamentary democracy is obviously able to change or ignore the rules. In these circumstances, the authority and neutrality of the ‘referee’ is of critical importance. The Speaker cannot afford to adopt a partisan role, either voluntarily, or in order to retain the confidence and support of the Government party.”

The National Party is trying to gain brownie points, to use the immature phrase of the Premier of this State, who this week pleaded on television to be given brownie points, to be given credit for things that he was doing, and who boasted about his courage in carrying out these matters.

This immature member for Landsborough came into this House today and the very first thing he did was chop down the independent Speaker of this Parliament. In relation to the conduct of the Premier, that is of course not surprising, nor should it be taken as anything that is unusual. We have in the member for Landsborough, the Premier of this State, a man who is obsessed with perceptions and image and not with performance. We have in the member for Landsborough a man who, when he came into this place, had never really done any work in his life. He arrived here when he was in his mid-twenties. He had never really worked out in the real world. He set about making for himself, with the aid of his father who held a high office in the Country Party, as it then was, a career as a career politician. He had never done a decent day’s work in his life, but he has done some very indecent days’ work since he became a member of Parliament.

As I have said, we have in this man a personality who is obsessed with his image and with the idea that he has to be given brownie points. What a disgustingly immature analogy for the man to use! As I have also said, we have in this man a person who has never in his life done a decent day’s work outside this Parliament and who claims that, having been here for so long, he is entitled to be Premier and leader of the Government in this place.

He is also a man who spent many years saying or pretending that he was an opponent of what were suggested to be extremely right-wing Country Party and National Party Governments in this State. Mr Ahern, the member for Landsborough, let it be known around the Parliament and around the State that he really did not go along with the image of the Country Party and the National Party Bjelke-Petersen Government; that he was much better than this, that he was above that. Even in those years he was seeking these brownie points, this credit for being a person of integrity, perception and ability.

**Mr Casey:** He would not have been much of a hit at a union meeting, would he?

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Ahern has never been a hit anywhere he has been. He has been a person who has set about making himself a career. He decided that he wanted to be something and it did not really matter how he got there.

Today I heard an appalling interjection from the honourable member for Landsborough. It occurred when the Leader of the Opposition was attacking him—and rightly so—over his behaviour surrounding the appointment of Sir Walter Campbell as Chief Justice of this State and his failure to vote for the nominee of the Attorney-General, the late Mr Justice Douglas. When Mr Goss attacked Mr Ahern over that matter and said that, with the release of the Cabinet records and the Premier’s failure to say anything else, it was well known now that he did not vote to support Mr Justice Douglas even though he was the nominee of the Attorney-General, all Mr Ahern could say in his own

defence—and I wrote it down—was, “What’s wrong with Wally Campbell, anyway?” What a pathetic comment! It was not a question of personalities in relation to that vote and that support; it was a question of propriety. It was known that Mr Justice Douglas was not being supported for the post of Chief Justice because through severe impropriety the returning officer and others in this State had passed on information to the Government of this State, through some members, that Mr Justice Douglas had voted for the Australian Labor Party in a State election.

When the members of Cabinet then came to make a decision, those with any propriety should have said, “I don’t want to know how or when or what Mr Justice Douglas did with his secret ballot in a State election. We will vote for the person who is entitled to the job. The Attorney-General’s nominee for that position of Chief Justice is Mr Justice Douglas.” Did the man who now seeks these immature brownie points stand up then for propriety, for the rule of law, for the proper maintenance of Government standards? Not at all! He cringed and crawled in the corner as he has done for years and said no, he would not support Mr Justice Douglas. Today his defence is, “What’s wrong with Wally Campbell, anyway?” He cannot even recognise a principle when he sees it. He does not have a clue. All he can see is honour and glory for himself and this overweening desire to be Premier of Queensland. As the research polls show, the Queensland people do not want as Premier of this State Mike Ahern, who has proved to be totally without courage and totally without ability to know what principles are.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr BRADY:** The honourable member for Gympie should wait and see. Mike Ahern will not be Premier of this State, nor does he deserve to be. He came into this Parliament as a boy and he is still a boy. He has never grown up. A man of his age and experience should not appear on television begging and crawling to the media—demanding to be given brownie points, for God’s sake! What sort of maturity does that demonstrate? If he is doing the right thing, let him do it. He will get credit and the people, his party and the media will support him; but cringing, crawling, whining and begging for brownie points is disgusting behaviour. Today we saw it again. I watched him when the Speaker rose and said that he was resigning. The Premier was aghast at what he had done, and well he might be, too, because he failed to back the Speaker of this Parliament.

He said he would support the Fitzgerald report “lock, stock and barrel” but, mind you, he said that before he had even read it. He had not read it because he was out there seeking brownie points. To say that he supported it before he had even read it is contemptible. A person who does not wait to read a report and then decides whether he will support it is a person who knows that the public wants certain things. His perception is that he has to be seen to be supporting the Fitzgerald report. It does not matter to him whether or not he really supports it; the perception is important to Mike Ahern—and only the perception, not the reality. The perception is what he has been caught out with today because he could not even stand having his conduct referred to the Privileges Committee.

Other members of this Parliament, including the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Goss, have been referred to the Privileges Committee in recent times, but Mr Ahern could not afford to be seen to have his conduct examined. He has the numbers on the Privileges Committee, but still it was too much for him. He stupidly put at risk the independence of the Speaker of this Parliament—a man whom he knows has been praised for having done a good job as Speaker, not only by the Labor Opposition and the Liberal Party but also by members of the National Party, the public and the media of this State. At different times, many members have said that they do not agree with the politics of the member for Isis, Lin Powell. Whatever his motivation, however, he has been seen in this Parliament to be a Speaker of courage and ability. I have been a member of this Parliament since February 1985, but in the time that I have been a member Mr Powell has stood out head and shoulders above any other Speaker.

In the way that he conducted himself as Speaker, he has acted with courage. I set aside his role as Speaker from his political instincts and statements. I have disagreed strongly with many of them and with many of the things he did as Minister for Education; but as Speaker, Mr Powell has been a man of courage and independence. The immature member for Landsborough could not take any semblance of criticism. He instructed his Whip not to follow the Speaker in relation to a direction to refer a matter to the Privileges Committee. I watched the Premier's face. He was aghast at what he had done. He was stunned, despite the fact that he said he knew some time ago that the Speaker would do that very thing. Of course he should have known. When a member refuses to follow the request of a Speaker and divides the Parliament, that is tantamount to a vote of no confidence in the Speaker, and any honourable Speaker will resign.

The honourable member for Landsborough does not have a very good understanding of honour because he spent too many years crawling to the powers that be in the National Party to stay where he was. The excuse that he is spreading, oozing and oiling around Queensland is, "What other choice did I have? I was the hope of the National Party. I had to stay in Cabinet so that when that dreadful monster, the former member for Barambah, Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, finally left, I could come forward as the saviour of the National Party, the saviour of the Queensland Government, and the saviour of the Queensland people." What arrant nonsense!

If the Premier was a man of honour, what should he have done when he disagreed strongly on principle in relation to matters taken up by the previous administration under the former Premier? What he should have done is very clear. He did not have to resign from the Parliament. He could have taken on a role similar to that taken by other members of Parliament in other Ministries. He could have retired to the back bench to await his opportunity when a new administration arose. If the member for Landsborough had returned to the back bench of the National Party Government, he would have received credit for having done so. What did he do? He took the cowardly way out. He stayed in Government and, as far as we can tell from the records that have now been opened, he supported the previous member for Barambah and former Premier at every opportunity. Whenever the crunch came—whether it was in relation to the appointment of the late Mr Justice Douglas or someone else to the position of Chief Justice of this State or in relation to other matters—as Joh Bjelke-Petersen says, he always got Mike Ahern's vote in Cabinet. This "man of honour" then used to go out and spread the word, "But I didn't really agree with this particular matter or that particular matter. You people spread the word throughout Queensland that I really disagreed. I'm a modern man, not a Neanderthal man like Joh. But I won't stand up in Cabinet and say that I am a modern man, because I might get sacked. I won't stand up in the party room of the National Party and say that I am a modern man, or I might get sacked. You tell everybody else that I am a modern man and not a Neanderthal man and that, if they can only wait for me, when I arrive as Premier of this State, everything will be sorted out."

Today the Premier made a pathetic comment. His only defence to the charge that he had destroyed a person who should have been Chief Justice of this State because he voted for the Queensland Labor Party—a man whose vote should never have been disclosed—was his interjection, "What's wrong with Wally Campbell, anyway?" Is that the statement of a man of principle? Is that the statement of a man who deserves to be the Premier of this State? Indeed, it is not. Unfortunately, it is the statement of a man who at this time happens to be the Premier of this State and who has forced a man who has received the plaudits of Queenslanders as being the most effective Speaker in the Queensland Parliament in our time to resign as a result of a virtual vote of no confidence in him.

Once again, the member for Landsborough has revealed himself as an immature person who is seeking to be perceived as a leader, but who, by his very nature, is incapable of being a real leader. However, he is not alone. The Attorney-General—who is another important person in relation to the conduct of this place and the Constitution of Queensland—has also betrayed the standards of this Parliament. I refer of course to

his failure to consult the Opposition and the Liberal Party in relation to the appointment of the three judges to conduct the Vasta inquiry. He broke his solemn undertaking in this House to do so. I have made this allegation before, and the Attorney-General has never replied to it either in this House or elsewhere. He gave the solemn undertaking that he would consult the Opposition in relation to the appointment of the three commissioners to that inquiry. He broke that undertaking and made no apology or explanation. Far from members of the Opposition being consulted, we were given only 10 minutes' notice of who the three appointees were, despite the fact that I pointed out to the Attorney-General that this inquiry was a parliamentary commission of inquiry and not a Government commission of inquiry. Being a parliamentary commission of inquiry, it was proper that all parties in this House be consulted. He said, "What a wonderful idea; marvellous. I will certainly do that. You have my undertaking." After giving that solemn undertaking, he cavalierly broke it because perceptions are more important to this National Party Government than reality. The Attorney-General is similarly incapable of behaving in the way that he should in this House and believes that perceptions are more important than the realities of proper behaviour.

This matter is very important, particularly today, because paragraph after paragraph of the Fitzgerald report refers to the importance of Parliament and suggests that members of Parliament should now be trying to work together as parliamentarians. We do not have to be buddy-buddies or cosy; we must be sensible. Amongst other things, Mr Fitzgerald stated that select committees of the Parliament should be formed, which is obvious. However, the first and most important matter to be decided is the select committee that will be involved in the electoral and administrative review commission, but again the Premier is incapable of behaving properly. He did not approach the leaders of the Labor Party and Liberal Party before coming into Parliament today and say, "This is something important. I will make a statement today about what we will do with the electoral and administrative review committee. Before we start moving on it, I should talk to you about what your ideas are, because we have promised to follow Mr Fitzgerald 'lock, stock and barrel'. Mr Fitzgerald said that Parliament should work together on these matters and if select committees are going to work, the National Party will not use its numbers on that committee to crunch the remaining members."

Instead of waiting to come into Parliament and announce the Government's intention, he announced it to the media. The media means everything to this Premier. Parliament is only some minor stage on which he struts and preens himself and begs to be given some brownie points or credits. There has been no contact with the Opposition as to who will be appointed to the select committee or when the select committee will be appointed. I understand that he did not even discuss the matter very widely within his own parliamentary membership, because today in the lift I told several members of the National Party what I had heard on the radio, that is, that the Government had given an undertaking to follow the recommendations to implement the electoral and administrative review commission and it had fixed a date for Parliament to come back in August. That was news to several back-bench members of the National Party, and I suspect it was probably news to 99 per cent of them.

**Mr FitzGerald:** We had a party room meeting this morning.

**Mr BRADDY:** It was not discussed at the party room meeting this morning.

This Premier, who struts and preens himself and begs to be given credit, is only posturing. Everyone is used to that now, and to seeing the television advertisements in which he appears with his coat casually over his shoulder, which is the very worst form of immature posturing. The National Party states that it will follow the spirit and letter of the Fitzgerald report. This is the very party that, at this very moment, continues to run Government advertisements at tax-payers' expense, which is also criticised in the Fitzgerald report. This National Party Government will continue to pay the remaining defamation writ costs to Labor Party defendants—another mode of conduct criticised in the Fitzgerald report. When the Premier is asked about the defamation payments, all he can say is, "That applies to the future."

What principle is that? What absolute nonsense is that? Some of these costs have not yet been paid. We have had the costs of only the Burns writ. More costs are to be assessed by the Supreme Court of Queensland. What does the Premier say? He says that all of that good, principled stuff is for the future. He wants to continue with the same shoddy outfit as he has always had and use tax-payers' money to pay the defamation costs. What arrant rubbish! I have heard that conduct defended here on the basis that it is done elsewhere. As Mr Fitzgerald has pointed out, the most that is done anywhere else is that, if a Cabinet Minister is a defendant in an action which commenced when he was a Cabinet Minister, in certain circumstances he can ask for his costs to be paid.

Here the difference is clear. The difference is that Cabinet Ministers, amongst whom is this honourable member for Landsborough, issued the writs for defamation. They were the people who started the actions. Why? We know the answer. Mr Hinze and others have told us the answer and Mr Fitzgerald has commented on it. The only reason for those defamation writs was to try to terrorise the Labor Party and the media into stopping their criticism of the National Party and its shady, shonky behaviour. What disgusting behaviour from the honourable member for Landsborough, the man who would posture and pretend to be the hope of Queensland in terms of principle!

Today we have also heard a comment from the Leader of the House. The effect of what has happened today is that the National Party moved a motion of no confidence against the Speaker. The comment from the honourable member for Nicklin, Mr Brian Austin, was the time-honoured one: "We have the numbers." That was his statement of principle on the very day that the Fitzgerald report was in here for debate. Mr Fitzgerald said to these people, who would pretend to apply the recommendations lock, stock and barrel, "You must have an independent Speaker; you must respect"——

**Mr Austin:** That is why we sit on this side of the House, because we have the numbers.

**Mr BRADY:** There he goes again. What Mr Fitzgerald said was that the party with the numbers has as much responsibility to respect the institution of Parliament as the parties that do not have the numbers. The honourable member for Nicklin does not understand anything about Parliament, all he understands is numbers and power.

What Mr Fitzgerald said in his report was that we, as members of Parliament, pay respect to the institution of Parliament and to the Speaker of Parliament and that we should try to work together when we should, in select committees, and try to make Parliament work because it is only in that way that the people of Queensland will begin to have more respect for the conduct of Parliament. I say to the member for Nicklin that there is a time and place to be tough and to use the numbers in this place for the good of the people of Queensland, but he has never understood that and his statement today shows that he will never understand it.

The institution of an independent Speaker means absolutely nothing to him. He just crunched the Speaker with the numbers. Along with his colleagues, he will pay the price, because the people of Queensland know that, whatever his political faults, Lin Powell has been the best Speaker in anyone's memory in this place. He was prepared to give everyone a reasonable go. We did not always agree with him; we have had people thrown out of this place with him as Speaker. Some of our people do not believe that they got a fair go, but there is no doubt that he has been the best Speaker. The conduct of the National Party today will be visited upon its members by the people of this State.

I will deal with another matter that shows the posturing of this Government. On two occasions we have been called back especially to debate reports, one on Mr Justice Vasta and that of Mr Fitzgerald. Why were we called back to commence at 2.30 on a Wednesday afternoon and not 10 o'clock on a Tuesday morning, as is normally the case? The answer is very, very clear. It has everything to do with the media and the times that things occur with the media. With a 2.30 start, after question-time and by the time the Premier would have finished his speech, it would be time for the evening news. What we have is an immature Premier who is not prepared to have Parliament

meet all day. There is no reason at all why Parliament could not have resumed at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, sat on Friday and gone into next week.

**Mrs Nelson:** It was to give you time to read the report.

**Mr BRADDY:** What arrant nonsense! We could have started a day later at 10 o'clock; we could have started two days later at 10 o'clock. There is nothing sacred about coming here on a Wednesday. In fact, we normally start on a Tuesday.

What it is about is the desire of the Premier to be perceived as the person of importance, the one who has the answers, the desire of the Premier to cut down the opportunity for the Opposition to be heard on these matters, and the desire to be reported on the radio and television news bulletins of that night and the newspapers of the following day. What we have is a man who is so lacking in confidence that he even has to alter the starting day of the recall of Parliament to give himself a head start. He will need more than a head start to convince the people of Queensland that he is a competent and principled Premier of this State. He is an immature and unprincipled person in his conduct of this State. Any man who could pretend to disagree as often as he said he did with the previous Premier and yet continue to serve him and continue to vote with him in Cabinet, cannot be seen as a man of principle. That is what the people of Queensland are saying about him.

Where was Mr Ahern all those years? He was sitting around the Cabinet table putting his hand up whenever he was told to do so. On the occasions when the Liberal Party disagreed with the majority National Party—God knows they were too few—it could not look to Mike Ahern for any support in the Cabinet room even on matters of principle. He was saying, "This might be wrong, but I want to wait. In five or 10 years' time I will be Premier and I will fix it up. Then I will go and beg the media to say, 'Gee, you're brave, Mike. You're courageous. You'll get some brownie points for that.'"

A tragic situation exists. The Government of this State is in the hands of a man who would be principled, who would be a leader who would try to achieve some matters which have for too long been ruled by power and not principle. He would be those things, but he is now, as he always has been, a man torn between wanting to be liked, to be loved—in fact, needing and begging to be liked—and wanting to hang on to power, the ministerial car and all the perks of ministerial office as well. In history, he will be seen as a man who was incapable of understanding that he was not able to do both things. If he really disagreed with the former Premier to the extent to which he told everyone he did, he should not have been in his Cabinet.

The Premier has taught himself to be a man who walks down that proverbial barbed-wire fence of Joh Bjelke-Petersen's with one leg on either side. While he is doing that, he is doing himself and Queensland irreparable damage. The people of Queensland are sick of it. They want a Premier who will get both feet across one side of the fence and make up his mind whether he is a man of principle who will support an independent Speaker in this place or whether he is a man who wants to pander to the National Party and to take his direction from where the power happens to be for the time being.

On this day, of all days, any member who respects the role of an independent Speaker has no option but to vote for the person—whatever his political faults might be—who is perceived and who is known to be the only independent Speaker we have had in this place in living memory. For anyone not to vote for that is clearly a vote for a return to the old ways that Mr Austin put so well when he said, "We have the numbers."

The Government of this State is flinging back in the face of Mr Tony Fitzgerald his request for this Parliament to respect the role of an impartial Speaker. If ever the Queensland people needed a clear signal that the Government cannot be trusted to implement real reform, they have been given it today. No clearer signal could be given. Again, we have been told by the Premier and his party, "We will give you what we are forced to give you and no more. We will not give you a more open Parliament. If we are forced to be seen as honest parliamentarians, people who are anxious for an open

Parliament, we will give you what we are forced to give you." We saw it today not only in the way in which the Government has behaved over this debate but also in relation to its earlier actions in recalling Parliament and its failure to consult either the Labor or the Liberal leaders on the appointment of a select committee. Are we to leave this place without any statement in the Parliament from the Premier about a select committee or any resolution of the Parliament about the appointment of a select committee? I suspect that we are.

We are left with a Premier who postures and panders to the media and the public. We also have a Government that is following him down that road. For that lesson to be driven home to us today, of all days, is a very salutary and sad lesson for the people of Queensland.

**Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX** (Nundah) (8.06 p.m.): The first matter that was raised in the course of the debate that caused me concern was the accusation that there is a conspiracy afoot between the former Speaker, the Labor Party and the Liberal Party regarding this event. I assure the Premier, who led the debate on the issue, that to my knowledge no such conspiracy ever existed, nor could it possibly have existed in the light of evidence already before the House.

I read in newspaper articles the possibility of Mr Burns' raising again the matter of privilege by letter to the Speaker. In view of the discussions in the media on the possibilities that might arise and all the alternatives that were open to the Parliament and the Speaker, it was no surprise that this event has occurred.

Talk of a conspiracy is utter rubbish. If Government members were not aware that this matter would be raised again today, they have not been carrying out their duties in informing themselves of current events. Everybody knew—every member of this Parliament, anyway—that the matter had already been raised by Mr Burns and that he had also said publicly that he would raise it with the Speaker. It was not news in that respect. So this accusation of a conspiracy just does not hold water.

In relation to the position of Speaker, I make this observation: the tests of a Government holding the Treasury benches—and there are many tests—comprise an impressive list. Honourable members have just seen one of those tests carried out in Tasmania, where the Government was lost by want of confidence. Another test, of course, is the ability of the Government to provide supply to His Excellency the Governor, and that is frequently tested in this country and in several overseas Parliaments. One of the other tests is support for the Speaker. All members are beholden to support the Speaker, but it is infinitely more significant for the Government benches to see that the Speaker is supported, because support of the Speaker reflects the ability of the Government to keep control of the Parliament.

Today the Speaker requested that a matter be referred to the Privileges Committee. The Speaker had received a letter from Mr Burns—it was not something that he dreamt up himself—and he felt it proper that the matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee. It should have automatically had the support of every member of this Parliament. The only group that refused to support the Speaker in regard to that matter was the Government. Of all the groups in the Parliament that should have been supporting the Speaker, it should have been the Government. It was an extraordinary scene when, quite clearly to all honourable members, on the voices the "Ayes" had it without any doubt whatsoever because Government members did not even bother to raise their voices. The Speaker having made that ruling, the Government then proceeded to call for a division and voted against the Speaker's recommendation.

What should have happened, of course, and what happens in all other Parliaments, is that the Chairman of the Privileges Committee should have risen to his feet and moved that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee. I saw the Speaker—as did all honourable members—look towards the Chairman of the Privileges Committee, and the Chairman of the Privileges Committee shook his head. Everybody saw that. Everybody witnessed that event; he shook his head and declined to do what is normal

practice and stand up and move that the matter be considered by the Privileges Committee—a most extraordinary set of circumstances.

I think it ought to go on record that when a serious matter of privilege arises, whether it is suddenly arising or arising as a result of a series of events, it is proper and expected of the Parliament that the matter be examined. It does not necessarily mean that there has been a breach of privilege. It does not necessarily mean that the person who raised it can actually pursue it to the nth degree, and if it is about some other member of Parliament it does not necessarily mean that that person is in any way guilty of a breach of privilege. However, it is quite proper for the matter to be examined, and there should not be any hesitation at all on the part of Government members to have those matters properly examined.

Honourable members witnessed this strange scene. It was not something that was manufactured because I, like all my colleagues, would have expected that the Government would have willingly had this matter referred to the Privileges Committee, to be determined and dealt with once and for all by report to the Parliament and a decision made by this Parliament in due course, which might have been months and months away. So, because a matter that could easily have been referred to the Privileges Committee was not so referred, a whole day has now been wasted. The Government is in deep crisis because of its failure to support the Chair, and it will be a nail in the Government's coffin.

**Mr Littleproud:** Did you notice the Speaker call against the Government?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** The Speaker called against the Government because the "Ayes" had it. The overwhelming voices were "Ayes". Not a squeak was heard from the member for Condamine—not even a squeaky "No".

Honourable members saw the evidence. I do not intend to go over it all. However, a copy of the gazette of the education office of May 1987—which apparently went onto the table of the then Minister for Health and was signed by Bill Rutkin—contains comments on the side, which were referred to earlier. I have a photocopy of a statement by the then Minister for Health, Mike Ahern. I only give it the way it is presented to me. Honourable members have already seen this document. It is to Jock from the Minister and is dated 25 May 1987. It states—

“In respect of this matter, it might be very carefully suggested to Bill Rutkin that he might make a public issue of this memorandum, being careful to leave our name out of it altogether.”

It is signed, "Mike Ahern, Minister."

I saw the Premier on television tonight. His excuse for objecting to the matter being referred to the Privileges Committee was that a person of his status should not be subjected to investigation by the Privileges Committee. All people in this Chamber are equal before the Chair. There is no status before the Chair in this Chamber. We are all equal. The fact that some are deferred to in this Chamber is because of courtesy, custom and practice.

**Mr Austin:** Sit down, Bill. Your voice is going.

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Normally the Minister would have to return to his usual seat before interjecting, but I will allow him to interject from that corner.

The custom and practice of this Parliament is to defer to political leaders, the Leader of the House, Ministers and members who are on their feet and speaking. The Premier is not exempt from being summoned before the Privileges Committee. The statement by the Premier tonight that he is in some way not supposed to appear before the Privileges Committee is unbelievable, and I find it alarming.

A reference to that sort of event can be found in the Fitzgerald report. At page 332 of the report, reference is made to lies in Parliament. Honourable members will remember

that this point arose as an accusation of telling a lie or misleading the Parliament. As to events of this nature, Mr Fitzgerald said—

“Lies told to Parliament concerning matters into which it is inquiring and lies told by public officials about matters pertinent to their office are not of themselves criminal offences. The former may be contempt of Parliament”—

which is the matter that we are discussing today—

“although that often admits of argument. Each constitutes an impediment to proper investigation of public affairs. The obligation of public officials to be accountable for their activities under colour of their office and the obligation of all to be accountable in respect of public affairs should be reinforced by the prescription of criminal offences constituted by:

- the holder of any public office lying in connection with that office;
- any person lying to Parliament in respect of any matter relating to personal conduct, (of any person).

That recommendation does not detract from the retention of right against self-incrimination subject to the discussion of that consideration earlier in this report.”

That matter is discussed by Mr Fitzgerald elsewhere in the report. We see that even Mr Fitzgerald regards the misleading of Parliament as a very serious matter. In fact, he recommends in his report that the penalties applying to people who deliberately mislead the Parliament should be upgraded, while, of course, he admits that those matters are subject to argument.

It is a serious matter when somebody is accused of misleading or lying to the Parliament. It always has been a serious matter. Under the Westminster system, many people who have been found guilty of misleading the Parliament have automatically resigned their seats or been expelled from the House. So it is a serious matter to be considered. It is not a matter to be lightly considered and people are not lightly accused of it. For the Premier to say that he is exempt and that the matter should not be allowed to go before the Privileges Committee is an arrant piece of nonsense and reveals a weakness on his part.

A number of events are associated with the history of contempt and matters of privilege. Various Parliaments in this country have given their attention to it, and we are doing that seriously tonight, probably for the first time in the history of this Parliament for many, many years. It is important to know and understand why we have a Privileges Committee. Prior to the establishment of a Privileges Committee in this State, a matter of privilege was simply a subject for open debate and resolution by this Parliament without necessarily taking evidence and without examining the people on both sides of an argument who might be involved in it. It was an unsatisfactory method of determining the matter of privilege arising, the background of which was not known, particularly as it was a matter that might have arisen suddenly.

A few years ago, we set up a Committee of Privileges, which other Parliaments had had for many years, in order to have these matters examined properly. To the credit of that committee, the reports on the matters that have been brought to its attention, which it has provided to the Queensland Parliament, have helped enormously in finding out the real set of circumstances and enabled the Parliament to be able to make a determination knowing all the information. In fact, it is quite possible, and it frequently occurs in Australia and in various places, for the Parliament to disagree with the recommendation of a privileges committee. It is not bound to agree. It is a very complete way in which these matters should be examined.

In the *House of Representatives Practice*, at page 669, the House of Commons said—

“Although any Member may complain of breach of privilege, the issue cannot be decided either by the Speaker or by the Committee of Privileges. The House alone is competent to pronounce on the matter; and the House has to decide, by resolution, that a breach of privilege has been committed. The Committee of

Privileges can express a view, but the House does not always accept the advice of the Committee and indeed has occasionally come to a decision without referring the issue to its Committee.”

That is the practice of the House of Commons and it is very apposite to the matter before us tonight.

It was not proper for the Speaker to make a determination on whether privilege had been breached or not. It was not within his authority to make that decision, but it certainly was within his authority to recommend to the Parliament that the matter be examined by the Privileges Committee. Again, I cannot understand in this day and age and with the Fitzgerald inquiry report hanging over the Parliament why this Government, under these circumstances and for want of a trivial decision of the Parliament at that time—and that is all it was—would want to pillory the Speaker over that issue. I cannot understand it. It is beyond my comprehension that for a mere few seconds of time the Government would destroy the Speaker and, consequently, itself. That is what Government members have done. They do not seem to even understand it. They do not even understand the nature and the significance of that event. It makes me extremely angry because Government members have so much explanatory material in the Fitzgerald report showing that the ruthless exercise of power—numbers—leads to arrogance and corruption. We are seeing here the corruption of the institution of this Parliament. The abuse of numbers simply to avoid a possible embarrassment—because there may well be after some months of investigation by the Privileges Committee——

**Mr FitzGerald:** Months?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Some months may be necessary. There is nothing wrong with that. If it is necessary to obtain legal opinion or to write to the House of Commons to obtain advice and so on, that is a proper thing for that committee to do. If it needs months to discover the truth, then it should take months before the matter is returned to the Parliament for ultimate decision.

This afternoon I became extremely angry and annoyed, as I am sure other members did, when that event occurred. Why in the name of fortune would any Government in any Parliament in Australia want to embarrass itself to the point of destruction by the events that honourable members witnessed this afternoon? I have a feeling, which I am sure many honourable members share, that many of the Government members who crossed the floor and voted against the Speaker had not the faintest idea what they were doing or the consequences of their action. Is it any wonder that time and time again in his report Mr Fitzgerald refers to this arrogant use of power for power's sake and for no other purpose?

As I said earlier, the Privileges Committee has a duty to inquire into the facts surrounding particular complaints. If it takes weeks or months, that is fine; let it do so. That committee does not have to agree with the views of those who make complaints. Because the ultimate resolution of Parliament is required, Parliament does not have to agree with the committee's findings.

**Mr Scott:** Do you mean it should be decided in the Parliament on the numbers?

**Sir WILLIAM KNOX:** Not necessarily, but it may well have to be.

Under those circumstances all the information is provided to the House. Because it is there for all members to see, they have no excuse for being ignorant of the facts surrounding a particular matter. That is the advantage. If a decision is made under those circumstances, possibly the use of numbers can be excused. It then becomes a political problem if those numbers are used capriciously or stupidly in the face of the facts that are published for everybody to see and on which they can pass judgment.

I turn now to the position of Speaker. As to the House of Commons—page 671 of the *House of Representatives Practice* states—

“... if, in the opinion of the Speaker, the matter does not merit precedence, he will inform the Member, in writing, accordingly and may also inform the House of his decision”—

and that is exactly what the Speaker did—

“... if, in the opinion of the Speaker, the matter merits precedence, he will inform the House of his decision, and the Member who raised the matter may move a motion without notice forthwith to refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges.”

Because of the failure of the chairman of the committee to take the cue from the Speaker, that was done on behalf of members.

It is true to say that Mr Powell carried out his office with considerable dignity and a great deal of understanding of his position. As my leader pointed out earlier, it is quite true that, in the past, many members of this House, particularly members of the Liberal Party, disagreed very strongly with the Speaker when he was Education Minister and occasionally disagreed with him on other matters. However, members of the Liberal Party found Mr Powell to be a capable Speaker who was able to handle the affairs of this House in a way with which they were delighted, not only when dealing with motions in the Chamber but also when dealing with matters to do with the precincts of the House.

The Speaker is the Chairman of the Parliamentary Service Commission, of which I am a member. Since the establishment of that commission, the Speaker has carried out his duties extremely well and the commission has worked extremely well under his leadership.

Honourable members are considering a person who has conducted himself in an exemplary manner. Because Mr Powell has done nothing to warrant his not continuing in that role, the Liberal Party supports his re-election as Speaker. Mr Powell's conduct has made this House a better place. On every count—many of which have been mentioned already—Mr Powell deserves to continue as Speaker. I do not say that to the denigration of the other nominee. On several occasions, both personally to Mr Lingard and publicly, I have said that he was an excellent Speaker.

No grounds other than political grounds exist for the Speaker's not continuing in office. The only people who are using political grounds in this House are members of the Government. The Opposition and the Liberal Party have no political squabble with the Speaker; Government members do. They are politicising the office of Speaker, which is regrettable.

No member of this House can put himself in a position of limiting his independence, and the Speaker ensures that that position is protected. Matters of a trivial nature are not raised, and the Speaker ensures that trivia does not dominate the House. Honourable members should not be unfair in their criticism of one another, and the Speaker ensures that honourable members are protected individually from that sort of attack. The House should exercise its privileges sparingly. Only on rare occasions is it necessary for matters to be examined by the Privileges Committee. This is one of those rare occasions on which a matter is serious enough to warrant its being referred to the committee.

This is the second occasion on which this matter has come before the House to be referred to the Privileges Committee. I assure the Premier that the issue will not go away. It will haunt him. For as long as the matter is not considered by the appropriate authorities in this Parliament the issue will continue to haunt the Premier, and the situation will get worse.

I have very much pleasure in supporting the nomination of Mr Powell.

Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (8.30 p.m.): I have pleasure in joining this debate to support the nomination of the honourable member for Fassifern for the Speakership. Before continuing my remarks, may I say that, unlike some of the Opposition members who

have used the absence of rules to make personal attacks and to vilify people's characters and abused this privilege of Parliament in a most unseemly way, I will behave as though the rules of Parliament applied. All other members who take part in this debate and who genuinely have a passionate love for the Westminster system, which they are so keen to espouse, ought to exercise the same responsibility. I regret that some of the remarks made by previous speakers from the two opposition parties have fallen well outside the rules of Parliament which would apply had a Speaker occupied the chair.

After the various news broadcasts and after the truth of the matter has been revealed for the people of Queensland to see with all its sinister overtones, it is all very interesting to see the opposition parties in this House trying desperately to scramble off the tiger's back. What is really most amusing for anyone who has been a member longer than the honourable member for Rockhampton, who can obviously only remember one debate about the Speakership, is that he cannot even remember the comments made by members of his own party about the recently resigned Speaker and the Speaker before him. For the honourable member's edification, I will quote comments made by the member for Salisbury, Mr Ardill, who said of Mr Lingard, the honourable member for Fassifern—

“Another member who brought great dignity to the Chamber, at least in the 10 months of his office, is the former Speaker, Mr Lingard. After all I had heard about the ridiculous performances in this Chamber, I was pleasantly surprised to see the dignity that Mr Lingard brought to this House . . . Mr Lingard occupied that chair with great dignity and in the time-honoured traditions of the Westminster system.

. . .

I, for one, am disappointed to see him leave it.”

The poor, pathetic creatures on the cross benches have also got themselves so deep in the mud that their noses have now disappeared.

**Mr Beard:** Why did you sack him?

**Mrs NELSON:** He resigned. He was never sacked; he resigned.

The person who was to replace Mr Lingard and for whom in the early days of his Speakership I had great respect, almost up till today, was Mr Lin Powell. Mr Ardill said of him—

“The alternative promoted by the National Party would be the least fit person in this Chamber to occupy the high office of Speaker . . .”

That is what the Labor Party said 18 months ago. Speaking about Mr Powell, a number of Labor Party and Liberal Party members said that he was the least fit person to occupy—

**Mr Campbell:** Who voted for him?

**Mrs NELSON:** May I point out to the poor, pathetic little member for Bundaberg that I have just said that I respected Mr Powell. Until today, I respected him. He has let me down. Later on I will say why.

I was happy to vote for both of these gentlemen as Speaker. However, I want to point out the hypocrisy of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. Only 18 months ago, Mr Innes said—

“If this House is to have dignity, a person who runs a good Parliament is needed. Mr Lingard did that with fairness and dignity.”

He went on to speak about—

**Mr Beard:** He did, too.

**Mrs NELSON:** But not today, he did not. Today he attacked him.

Today Mr Innes applauded Mr Powell. At that time 18 months ago he said—

“I now turn to Mr Powell. His nomination is an indication that the politics of compromise have once again prevailed in the face of a demand for excellence.”

He then castigated Mr Powell. In fact, even Sir William was drawn into the debate by way of interjection to give Mr Powell a bit of a touch-up. In his final remarks, Mr Innes said—

“If Mr Powell is elected Speaker”——

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** I am just letting you know what hypocrites they all are.

As I was saying, Mr Innes said—

“If Mr Powell is elected Speaker, I hope that he will defy the prediction that I have made and defy the record that he had in this House.”

I now find it very amusing that Mr Goss and Mr Innes and the Labor Party and the Liberal Party members in this House are falling over themselves to say what a super fellow he is—that he has been the best Speaker in the Parliament’s history—when 18 months ago they were castigating him privately and publicly.

**Mr Beard:** On his record in a different role. You’re dopey.

**Mrs NELSON:** The member for Mount Isa is very excited tonight because his Labor Party opponent is in the public gallery. I think he is a little bit nervous because the fellow has a strong eye on his seat. I refer to the Mayor of Mount Isa, Tony McGrady. I think the member for Mount Isa is a little bit shaky tonight.

**Mr Beard:** You always excite me. I can’t deny it, Beryce. It’s you.

**Mrs NELSON:** I can only say the poor fellow is easily excited. That is all I can say.

**Mr Beard:** I just wanted you fellows to know that.

**Mrs NELSON:** I must say the poor fellow is obviously easily agitated.

Returning to the real circumstances of today—I intend to make some comments about Mr Braddy’s remarks and also those of the wily Sir William. The circumstances were a sinister move, and are seen, have been seen already and will continue to be seen by the people of Queensland as a sinister move, by forces outside of Parliament to bring on an early election. That is the bottom line: to bring on an early election. Both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are desperate to go to the polls before the normal parliamentary Budget session can take place. Let us look at the remarks made by Sir William about this letter.

**Mr Stoneman:** The wily Sir William.

**Mrs NELSON:** Yes, the wily Sir William. I must say that I am fond of him. I cannot help myself.

**Mr Stoneman:** The grandfather.

**Mrs NELSON:** Yes. He is a lovely fatherly figure and one of the elder statesmen of the Parliament. Unfortunately in this instance, he has used that statesmanlike approach to try to delude the Parliament and the media.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** I am sympathetic towards him because he has the flu. The fact of the matter is that he is trying to paint a picture showing that it is vital and necessary for this letter to be referred to the Privileges Committee. That is not the issue which was addressed in this Parliament today. The issue was not whether it could go to the Privileges Committee, but whether it should go to the Privileges Committee. The matter

had been dealt with openly and in public. The issues had certainly been addressed and it was not an appropriate matter to be referred to the Privileges Committee.

**Mr Hamill:** Surely it is a matter for the Privileges Committee. They are the ones who accept it or reject it.

**Mrs NELSON:** No. It is a matter for this Parliament. The Privileges Committee gets the matter only if this Parliament votes for it. On this occasion, the Parliament voted against it. If Mr Hamill had been a member of the Government, he would have voted not to refer a trivial matter concerning his leader to the Privileges Committee, and he knows it.

May I say that Sir William revealed what I believe to be the true purpose of the action. Because the Government should support the Speaker, the referral of the matter to the Privileges Committee and the subsequent resignation of the Speaker are two of the four grounds that could show a want of confidence in the Government. The real purpose of today's preliminary vote was to try to bring down the Government and bring on an early election. That is the bottom line. Members of the Liberal and Labor Parties pretended not to know of this matter until five minutes before the debate, but that has been substantially disproved. They knew yesterday. In both opposition parties, a number of members knew yesterday.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** They certainly did, because Tommy Burns was telling the world.

**Mr Beard** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** Terry Gygar sat in this Chamber with his fingers crossed. They were trying to create great political instability in this State by being part of a dirty little deal. In venality, it exceeds by far the actions of Terry White and his cohorts in 1983.

**Mr Borbidge:** 1983 revisited.

**Mrs NELSON:** That is right. The people of Queensland who saw other people present—those who had no right to have any influence over the Parliament or politics of this State—have reacted with abhorrence, anger and dismay. They will turn on the parties who have participated. By virtue of tomorrow's newspapers and other media, they will know that the Leader of the Opposition moved the motion and that the Leader of the Liberal opposition party seconded it. The only logical and honest conclusion they will be able to come to is that a deal was entered into and a conspiracy carried out. What is it all about? It is about the Fitzgerald report and its recommendations.

The real tragedy is that good people, including the honourable member for Isis, have been used. History will record that and reveal it. No matter what anybody in this Parliament says, that is what the people of this State believe.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** The honourable member for Windsor takes great delight during these debates in talking about principles, honour and parties. I will repeat what I said a few months ago in this House. I did not move away from what I believed in; the Liberal Party did. A few weeks ago I fleetingly thought that Andrew Peacock may be dragging the Liberal Party out of the mire, but then I saw Wilson Tuckey and John Moore on television during the *Four Corners* debate which reinforced my view that nothing has changed in the Liberal Party. Because of the Gygars and Whites, and the Tuckeys and Moores running the Federal level of the Liberal Party, I am proud that I resigned and I am proud that I joined the National Party. I am a life member of the National Party.

**Mr Gygar:** So are Brian Austin and Don Lane, aren't they?

**Mrs NELSON:** Mr Gygar has probably been one of the worst forces in this Parliament—a fact which is agreed to by every honourable member, including members of his own party. His influence has probably been the most damaging of all on his party.

**Mr Gygar** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** I would not pay you the compliment.

The issue is that this is a very nasty day. Today a group of people decided that they would subvert the natural course of justice to delay the implementation of the Fitzgerald report. The report has to be debated in this Parliament. It would have been half way through being debated and it could have been accepted by this Parliament——

**Mr Gygar:** Half way? We would have been debating it for only 12 hours.

**Mrs NELSON:** We certainly would have been well into the debate but, instead, a pathetic and dirty little deal took place. I believe people were innocently brought into that deal and have allowed themselves to be used. People in the Labor Party knew what was going on. The member for Lytton will receive a bad footnote in history in relation to this matter, which is a great pity.

Regrettably, the actions of people on the cross benches have proved to be the greater disappointment. I can understand that the Labor Party, which is the major Opposition party, wants to govern and I can understand members of the Opposition taking desperate measures; but those who purport to keep the “expletive deleted” honest—the phrase Mr Innes borrowed from the Australian Democrats——

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** That is what the Leader of the Liberal Party accused the member for Isis of being. I will not use the term because it would appear in *Hansard*. The honourable member should turn around and say it to the Hansard gallery. That is the type of language that the Leader of the Liberal Party uses. These are the people who allege that they want to keep the Parliament honest, yet they participate in actions that will seal their fate. How can the people of Queensland entrust the reins of even a part of Government or any part of the body politic in this State to people who would be involved in something in which Ted Lyons is part of the background, after all their passionate outbursts which completely ignore their part in 26 years of Government?

**Mr Gygar:** Or the trustees of the National Party.

**Mrs NELSON:** Or the Liberal Party trustees, including Sir Roderick Proctor.

**Mr Gygar** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** Zero, thank God.

The honourable member for Rockhampton and other honourable members who have spoken in this House this afternoon and this evening have raised the subject of the Fitzgerald report and corruption. I intend to speak in the debate on the Fitzgerald report; but, since there is interest in the subject, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that——

**Mr Gygar:** The Morgan poll.

**Mrs NELSON:** In 1983 the Morgan poll was reversed overnight and it is about to do the same thing. If I were the honourable member for Stafford I would not be laughing too loud; he came in spinner on that matter. In 1983 the poll went completely around in a circle and the honourable member can watch it do the same in the next seven days.

**Mr Stoneman:** He's the man who stabbed his leader in the back.

**Mrs NELSON:** No, it was three leaders, not one. He has brought three leaders down.

People want to talk about corruption and I wish to raise the issue. In the last month, with the support of the staff of the Parliamentary Library, I have carried out some research. I wish to place on record my thanks to the library staff for their assistance. They did an outstanding job in what was a difficult task. It is amazing how reluctant other State Governments are to part with their reports on corruption. I had extraordinary difficulty, but in the end I managed to get 30 reports on the issue of corruption in other States and two reports from the Commonwealth, which have all been conducted in the last 15 years. If one looks particularly at the period of the Wran Government in New South Wales and the Bannon Government in South Australia, one will discover some discreditable and appalling acts of people closing their eyes and turning the other way. The Queensland Government has had the courage and fortitude to open everything up to public scrutiny. Many people in the Labor Party and Liberal Party did not want to hold this inquiry. They kept saying behind closed doors, "You blokes are mad", particularly the members who have been in coalition.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mrs NELSON:** Yes, they were. The honourable member does not even know what his own factional opponents are doing in the corridors of Parliament.

I wish to quote from a few of those reports. In 1978 in New South Wales there was an inquiry into crime control that was disbanded before it could proceed. Its report was never widely published and it called for the establishment of a crime commission in New South Wales to fully expose the relationship between politicians, organised crime and the police which had been occurring in New South Wales since the 1940s, and some people say since the 1930s. It took 11 years and a change of Government and a change of Premier in New South Wales to bring about the establishment of such a commission. Reports were issued in 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982 and another one in 1985, which was a complete whitewash. In a report of the New South Wales Ombudsman in 1986, the most that the poor fellow could say was—

"I have concluded that I would be using scarce public resources to little useful effect were I to carry this matter further."

He was threatened by Wran to close down the inquiry. The report continues—

"I have therefore decided to consent to the discontinuance of the investigation.

I have reached this decision with considerable difficulty, having regard to the role and responsibilities of an Assistant Commissioner."

This was in relation to the immoral, unethical and illegal activities of one of the assistant commissioners of police in New South Wales. It was whitewashed and pushed under the carpet. In 10 years in New South Wales at least six inquiries were held and it was not until the *Age* tapes in 1983 that Hawke got rid of Neville Wran, but that matter can come out on another day.

Cain's Labor Government, the so-called Saint John of Victoria, has held three royal commissions covering discipline in the police force, a casino inquiry and police behaviour which condemned a whole range of activities, including that of the internal investigation unit. It would appear from my research that the internal investigation unit and the behaviour of the police force have been the same across Australia, in every State and in the Federal police force. This State has led the way in cleaning up corruption and every other State Government must follow suit.

The next report refers to police malpractice in Victoria. The information contained in it will really rock honourable members' souls. I have been through the report, but at this stage I have only reached "H" in the alphabet. The report lists police officers against whom adverse findings were made. An officer by the name of Adams was involved in conspiracy and the giving of false evidence; an officer called Brown was party to assault, conspiracy and harassment; police officer Burgess obstructed the course of justice; police officer Clark was involved in assault, conspiracy and vehicle damage; and police officer Cuddy was involved in harassment, intimidation, two assaults and conspiracy to give false evidence. What is more, he gave false evidence. There are hundreds and hundreds

of names in the report. The report refers to a police officer named Davies who was involved in perjury, false evidence, conspiracy and two other perjury charges; Delianis was involved in harassment and breach of procedure; Dennis was involved in conspiracy and the giving of false evidence; and an officer by the name of Dixon aided and abetted damage to premises and the giving of false evidence.

There is one lovely fellow down here by the name of Ferguson, who was charged with harassment, unlawful holding of a defendant, assault, two counts of conspiracy, denial of the rights of a citizen and two counts of false evidence. A fellow called Guardian was a real champion. He was charged on two counts of receiving moneys, favours for criminals, harassment, assault, abuse and unlawful detention.

**Mr Hamill:** If he was in Queensland, he would become commissioner.

**Mrs NELSON:** I am glad that the honourable member mentioned commissioners, because the commissioner and two deputy commissioners in New South Wales, the commissioner in South Australia and two commissioners and deputies in Victoria have all been the subject of inquiries and all have behaved in a way that makes what has happened in Queensland look like a Sunday school picnic.

**Mr Comben:** Why are you laughing?

**Mrs NELSON:** No-one is laughing. The honourable member is the one who is making light of it. The honourable member for Windsor has lost himself in his beard.

The reports from around Australia bear a striking similarity to the revelations of the Fitzgerald inquiry. I am pleased that Mr Fitzgerald was able to do what the reports in the other States were not able to do. In the other States, in 27 of those 30 cases those reports were not acted upon. In fact, a substantial number of them were not printed; they were not released, they were pushed away into a cupboard and the people who wrote those reports——

**Mr Beard:** Lucas and Sturgess were ignored.

**Mrs NELSON:** I am really amused by the member for Mount Isa. I know he is awfully worried and that he has to get the Labor vote, the average battler's vote, but does he have to forget that he is supposed to be a conservative?

**Mr Beard:** What did you do with the Sturgess report?

**Mrs NELSON:** He has an identity crisis.

**Mr Beard:** It has nothing to do with politics. That was corruption.

**Mrs NELSON:** He is very excited again. He has become agitated.

The fact of the matter is that corruption in the police force and in senior levels of the public service has been endemic in the Australian body politic for 50 to 100 years and it is time to flush it out.

**Mr Gygar:** The Queensland Nationals.

**Mrs NELSON:** The honourable member for Stafford seems to think that the Nationals are better at it. He ought to have a look at his Liberal colleagues in Victoria and see what the Hamer Government got up to. Again, it makes anything that has happened in Queensland pale into insignificance. He could also look at what happened with the Burke Labor Government in Western Australia. There were loans and deals for friends of the Government, friends who defaulted on their loans. They were given \$600,000, \$700,000 and \$2m. If my friend the member for Stafford wants it, he can have it. That money was given by the tax-payers of Western Australia to individual businesspeople who were friends of the Government. Yet the Labor and Liberal Parties want to pretend some self-righteousness and adopt some holier-than-thou approach in this Chamber.

If the member for Rockhampton is fair dinkum and if we really want to have a bipartisan debate and a bipartisan approach to this issue, then everybody should admit that corruption in the public service, in the police force and in the business community has been——

**Mr Comben:** And in the National Party.

**Mrs NELSON:** And in the Labor Party and in the Liberal Party.

**Mr Comben:** Well, say it.

**Mrs NELSON:** The honourable member should not run away from it. What I said is that it involves every party in Australia.

That is the only way that we can approach this positively. The only way that the whole nation will deal with this issue is if it stops being a party-political scoring board and if everybody in the community recognises the problem that it is.

**Mr Beard:** Come on, smile when you say that.

**Mrs NELSON:** I am perfectly serious.

The farce is that the Labor and Liberal Parties in this place are trying to pretend that somehow only the National Party was mentioned in this report. What occurred started under Labor, it was institutionalised under Labor in the forties, it was institutionalised in New South Wales in the 1930s and 1940s and it was the same in Victoria and Western Australia, and it was carried on by Liberal Governments in New South Wales and Victoria, so nobody can escape the accusation that Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria—in fact every State—need to clean up their act. But who has taken the steps to do it? Only Queensland! Only Queensland has had the fortitude to do it.

I will say this to the people of Queensland, and I support the person who said it first. If the Honourable Leader of the National Party, Mike Ahern, is not supported by the people of Queensland—I believe quite strongly that he will be, particularly so after this little fiasco—at the end of the year, there is no hope in Australia for the removal of corruption anywhere. Lack of support for him would mean that the people of Queensland are not prepared to support someone who wanted to get rid of corruption. I believe they will support him and they will support the National Party because we have had the fortitude to do this.

The people of Queensland will not support the people who took part in this charade today. I have had calls from and talked to people in my own area. I have also watched the sinister nature of what has happened here today. We can talk about coincidence until the cows come home, but the fact of the matter is that a few key people had a vested interest in trying to stop the Fitzgerald report being debated and to stop the recommendations being implemented. There they were as large as life. The Queensland people will not be duped into thinking that those who moved and seconded the motion were not intimately acquainted with the circumstances and involved with the deal.

It is my pleasure to support Mr Lingard. Previously in this House, he was an excellent Speaker.

**Mr Gygar:** That is not what you said when Powell replaced him.

**Mrs NELSON:** That is exactly what I said. Mr Powell knows that.

The honourable member for Albert was right. I said to the honourable member for Sherwood that, when people in that situation allow their personal feelings to overcome them, they lose their objectivity and make decisions that they would never otherwise make. This is one of those occasions. All the parties involved will live to regret it.

**Mr POWELL (Isis) (9.01 p.m.):** It is proper that I should rise in my place and explain to the Parliament the reason why I recommended this afternoon that the letter

that Mr Burns had written to me be referred to the Privileges Committee. Before going on to that issue, I wish to address some other matters.

Firstly, I apologise to the Parliament that this debate is taking place at all. It certainly was not of my making.

Those members hysterically laughing, such as the member for Nicklin, have no conception of what principle or honesty is all about.

**Mr Austin:** Tell the Parliament why you didn't call, "The 'Noes' have it."

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Because they weren't loud enough.

**Mr POWELL:** I will come to that little fairystory in a moment.

The fairy-tale that the Premier told this afternoon is exactly that. How anybody who is allegedly an intelligent person and who has a degree from a university could expect other intelligent people to believe the nonsense that the Premier carried on about with the conspiracy theory is beyond my comprehension.

I will detail the scenario. If I had been conspiring to set this particular scene, as an Independent, surely it would be better for me to be running up to an election as the Speaker rather than as an Independent back-bencher. What is more, if I was going to conspire to grandstand this matter, would I not have had clandestine meetings with members of the Opposition, members of the Liberal Party and some members of the National Party? No member of this Parliament has had a clandestine meeting with me.

Shortly before 12 noon today, I called the Deputy Leader of the Opposition into my office and said to him, "Tommy, I've got your letter here. You present me with a problem. I believe the proper thing is to refer it to the Privileges Committee." He said, "Okay", and walked out. I took steps to get in touch with the Government Whip to inform him that that is exactly what I was going to do. I could not contact him immediately by phone and thought no more about it.

At 12 noon in my office, I had a meeting with the Deputy Speaker and the panel of Temporary Chairmen to acquaint them with the statement that I was going to make to the Parliament with regard to the incorporation of material in *Hansard* and also the matter of outlawing read speeches in the Parliament. They will confirm that.

I then went to a luncheon appointment with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Edward Lyons. Of course, those who have far more devious minds than mine have put some sort of construction on that. I will put it in place.

**Mr Borbidge:** Channel 9 gategashed—or were they invited?

**Mr POWELL:** If I were the member for Surfers Paradise, from where a busload of people had come to support Sir Joh in a public ABC program last night, I would be keeping very quiet if I were looking for votes.

The arrangement for the luncheon function today had been made six or eight weeks ago.

**Mr Stoneman:** Sticky paper stuff.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Clerk, forgive my mirth at the comment by the member for Burdekin.

Constantly I have phone calls from various people asking me to have lunch or dinner with them. In fact, last night I had dinner with two people. I suppose that they were part of the conspiracy, too! They are wanting to have a Christian university established in Queensland. The Premier met with them early in his Premiership and said, "Yes, we will have it." I have not seen it yet. Perhaps his gesticulation was out of synchronisation.

Nevertheless, I received telephone calls from Sir Edward and Sir Joh requesting me to have lunch with them. As honourable members know, when I am in Brisbane I am

reasonably busy. Therefore, six or eight weeks ago—I cannot remember the date—I said to my secretary, “I am being hounded by these people wanting to have lunch with me. I will be in Brisbane on 5 July for the sitting of Parliament. Tell them to come and have lunch with me.” At that stage, the matter raised by Mr Burns had not been raised.

I turn to the matter raised by Mr Burns. Honourable members will have noted that Mr Burns used my name in the question that he asked.

**Mr Borbidge:** It was a good guess when Parliament was going to sit.

**Mr POWELL:** At that time, Parliament had been scheduled to sit. I suggest that the member for Surfers Paradise ought to check his notes and also the communications between the Leader of the House’s office and my office as to the dates for the sitting of Parliament. Proper communication has taken place between those two offices to alert the officers of Parliament as to when Parliament will sit.

On 8 June, the member for Lytton asked a question without notice. Unfortunately, he used my name within that question. I say “unfortunately”, because in hindsight perhaps I could have ruled the question out of order on the basis that the Speaker’s name—in another capacity, admittedly—was being used. However, I did not. The Premier, I imagine, listened to the question and just said, “The answer to the honourable member’s question is, ‘No.’” I was rather surprised by his answer, I must confess, but I thought nothing more about it because at that stage I had not seen the accompanying document on which Mr Burns had based his question. The accompanying document on which Mr Burns had based his question is critical to this particular debate.

After consultation with some other Speakers in Australia and the Clerk of the Parliament, I decided that the matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee of this Parliament. The document, which has been widely canvassed in this Chamber, stated clearly that Mr Ahern had had typed on the back of a bit of paper that he had received from a Bill Rutkin an instruction to his press secretary that Rutkin should make the issue of AIDS education a public issue without mentioning his, Mr Ahern’s, name.

I refer honourable members to a number of newspaper articles. When I left the Ministry at the end of November 1987, one of the mistakes I made was not taking with me all my copies of Cabinet decisions during the time that I had been a Minister. At that time I did not believe that that would be necessary. I did not think I would ever need that sort of information. So I did what I believed was the proper thing and left all of it behind for my successor, who would then have the opportunity to examine those decisions, particularly those pertaining to education. I am now sorry that I did not take my copies of those decisions with me because, if those Cabinet decisions were examined, there would be irrefutable evidence that—and I say this quite advisedly and shortly I will go through my reasons for saying it—if Mr Ahern understood Mr Burns’ question clearly, then he clearly had misled the House.

On page 16 of the *Courier-Mail* of 30 April 1987 honourable members will find a headline which states, “Government takes AIDS fight to schools”. The article goes through in detail what Cabinet decision 50845 of 2 March 1987 stated. I would be interested to know where the *Courier-Mail* got that Cabinet decision from. It certainly did not get it from the Education Department or the Minister for Education. However, the *Courier-Mail* has printed verbatim the decision of Cabinet of 2 March 1987. Honourable members can obtain that article. I will not waste the time of the Parliament by reading the whole thing. However, I will read the recommendations at the end, which are as follows—

“It is recommended that:

- (i) Before the end of 1987 an AIDS prevention program be implemented in Queensland State schools targeting all years 8 to 12 students.
- (ii) That the program be presented by State school teachers through the existing curriculum arrangement.

- (iii) That the program be jointly evaluated by the Departments of Health and Education within six months of implementation.
- (iv) That the non-government secondary schools be encouraged to participate in the program.”

The *Sun* of 29 April, the previous day, contains the headline, “Ahern presses for full AIDS education”. In the article the following words are stated by the journalist, Wayne Sanderson—

“Mr Powell said students would simply be told it was spread through the transmission of bodily fluids through sexual intercourse.

If students had any further questions, they should be told to ask a doctor, Mr Powell said.

Mr Ahern hit back last night saying: ‘The transfer of bodily fluids could mean anything (to young people), including crying on each other’s shoulders.

‘If a youngster asks a question and you send him off to a doctor, then the question should be raised whether we should have an AIDS education program at all.’ ”

That clearly was a breach of Cabinet solidarity and clearly an attempt by Mr Ahern to go outside Cabinet and argue for a particular issue in the newspapers.

The next article that I have is dated 6 May 1987. In it there is a further report of a Cabinet meeting and a Cabinet decision on this question of AIDS education. Part of the article, written by Peter Morley, states—

“Health Minister Ahern and Education Minister Powell have disagreed on how the matter should be implemented.”

I would have imagined that a Cabinet decision was a Cabinet decision and that it should be implemented.

Again I refer honourable members to that particular article of 6 May 1987 in the *Courier-Mail* and also an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 7 May headed “MD lectures plan ‘stupid’ ”. The Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Association came out and said that. Then there is an attack on the Government by the Queensland Teachers Union President, Mary Kelly, on the decision of Cabinet.

I have a photocopy of another article in the *Courier-Mail* of 9 June. The only part of the heading that I can read is, “Classroom AIDS video”. The article states—

“The State Government will use a specially made videotape to spearhead its AIDS education campaign in high schools.

The Health Minister, Mr Ahern, last night said production of the video would start once Queensland’s AIDS Task Force member, Dr Ken Donald, returned next week from the world AIDS congress in Washington.”

I might add that that was not a Cabinet decision but rather a decision by the then Minister for Health.

The other critical thing that should be taken into consideration is that when Mr Burns raised this question it became a matter of media speculation. I was asked a number of questions about the issue, and the nub of the question by Mr Burns was whether I had been consulted. The *Courier-Mail* asked me that and I said, “No.”, that I had not been consulted. I said, “Yes.”, that there had been Cabinet discussions on the issue—and certainly there were—but certainly there had been no consultation with me about the letter that Rutkin had written to Ahern and which was the basis of the question by the member for Lytton. There was no consultation with me at all on that subject. Therefore, on that basis it is my proposition that the Premier had misled the Parliament.

The other point that should be noted is that the date on the memo from Ahern to his press secretary was 25 May 1987. The press publicity associated with the question that Mr Burns asked and Ahern’s defence of it in the media after that date referred to

Cabinet decisions of September 1987. In fact, the question that Mr Burns asked in the Parliament was about Cabinet decisions that had been made in April and May 1987. The letter that Ahern had received from Rutkin, and the recommendation that Ahern had given his press secretary to go back to Rutkin, was obviously an attempt to get Rutkin and the AIDS Council to make a political issue out of a decision of Cabinet. Quite frankly, if Ahern had felt strongly about it, he should have done the decent thing and resigned from Cabinet because he did not agree with that particular decision.

The reasons why I decided not to make a decision on Mr Burns' letter today and instead to refer it to the Privileges Committee are manifold. In the first instance, I was mentioned in the question. Secondly, I believe it improper that a Speaker in the chair should have to make a decision that ultimately is based on political judgment. It is wrong and improper for any Speaker to have to make from the chair a decision that is political. The doubt in some people's minds about the question asked by Mr Burns was that Mr Burns used the term "homosexual lobby" and that the memo to which he was referring and which Mr Ahern had signed by Bill Rutkin, who was chairman of the AIDS Council. What Mr Burns was doing was equating Rutkin and the AIDS Council with the homosexual lobby. If I had liked, I could have slid out from under and said, "No, Mr Ahern has not misled the Parliament, because Rutkin is not the homosexual lobby." But a Speaker ought not be required to make that sort of decision. That is wrong. It is wrong for members to require their Speaker to do that.

After consultation with a number of Speakers in other Parliaments at a seminar that I attended in Western Samoa, and in discussion with the Clerk of the Parliament yesterday, I finally made my decision this morning at about 11.30 that I would have to recommend that this matter go to the Privileges Committee. I had not informed the Leader of the Opposition of that matter. I had not even discussed with him what I should do with it. I had not discussed the issue with any other member of this Parliament. I had written a letter to one member of Parliament and informed him that I believed that the proper thing for me to do was to refer it to the Privileges Committee, or recommend that it be referred to the Privileges Committee. However, I did not discuss the matter with him. I simply wrote him a letter. Honourable members may wonder why I had written him a letter. The reason is that I suspect that my telephone is tapped. I have found that some people can quote for me things that have occurred in telephone conversations between myself and others, and that disturbs me. I decided that the proper thing to do was to write a letter to that individual.

As I said earlier, I tried to contact the Government Whip, who is chairman of the Privileges Committee. He apparently was unavailable. I thought nothing more of it until after lunch. When I returned from lunch, I said to my secretary, "I must see Tony FitzGerald"—she was a bit quizzical when I said "Tony FitzGerald", and I said, "No, no, no, the member for Lockyer—and acquaint him with the fact that this matter should be referred to the Privileges Committee." He did not have any opportunity to discuss the issue with me because the second bells were ringing. He then returned to the Chamber. After delivering my recommendations on the incorporation of material in *Hansard* and on the matter of the reading of speeches, the next issue I had before me was the matter of Mr Burns' letter. I could have slid out from under. I could have said, "I have received this letter from the member for Lytton and the House should decide what I do with it." But those members who know me would know that that is not my style. I am not a wimp. I believe that if a thing has to be done, one does it and one makes that recommendation. I did that.

I then put the question. The Leader of the House interjected earlier and asked me why I said, "I think the 'Ayes' have it." The simple answer to that is that I did not think that there would be any opposition. In fact, I was surprised that Mr FitzGerald did not rise to his feet to move the motion. When the Leader of the Opposition moved the motion, in my innocence I still believed that the Government would have supported that particular move. After all, as Speaker I was recommending an action of the Parliament, so I just thought that it would go through. If anyone had been watching me, he would have seen that in my hand I had the next document that was on my list,

which was the Fitzgerald inquiry report. I was going to inform honourable members that I had received the report and then wait for the Leader of the House to move that it be tabled. My mind was going on to the next thing I had to do. Those members who have occupied the chair would know that at times it is a little bit awkward. One really has to be thinking on one's feet. Those members who have never taken the chairmanship of this Parliament may think that it is a simple matter to sit up there and make sure that the form of the Parliament follows along in a smooth pattern. I tried to make the Parliament work in a smooth pattern so that there were no embarrassing pauses. When I was Speaker I think that largely happened. I had in my mind that the next thing to get on with was the Fitzgerald report. I simply said, "The question is that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee. Those of that opinion say 'Aye', to the contrary 'No'; I think the 'Ayes' have it." I was about to stand up when I realised that the Leader of the House had said, "No." I sat back a little bit. I was about to say, "Order! I will put the question again.", when the Leader of the House yelled, "Divide!" I merely said, "Division required. Ring the bells."

**An Opposition member:** And the Premier.

**Mr POWELL:** The only one I heard was Mr Austin. I immediately said, "Ring the bells. There will be a division for four minutes."

Those people who can read into what I have done today that it was an attempt to conspire with those who oppose the Government have more devious minds than I have. I was attempting simply to follow the tried and trusted rules of parliamentary democracy.

On television tonight the Premier said that it is totally improper that this matter should go to the Privileges Committee—that a Premier should be hauled before the Privileges Committee. The Premier or the leader of the Government in any Parliament is no more or less important than is any other member. In fact, the leader of the Government in a Parliament should be the most accountable person in that Parliament and should face up to the most scrutiny of anyone in that Parliament. It is incredible to believe that a Premier can say, "A matter of privilege raised about the Leader of the Opposition should go to the Privileges Committee, but I am absolved from any such responsibility." What rot!

For goodness' sake, members of this Parliament should think as parliamentarians and forget about the half-smart, stupid remarks that have been made and the fairy-tale constructions that they have been made to believe about my motives on this issue. I invite members to consult those people with whom I have spoken. If they do they will learn that, as an Independent, I had no ulterior motive. Why would I want to bring on an early election? I need time to get around my electorate and campaign. I do not want an early election. What rot! Yet the conspiracy theory comes through from those devious people who would seek to subvert parliamentary democracy in this State.

I deal now with my experience as Speaker of this Parliament, the actions that I have implemented in this Parliament and the receipt of the Fitzgerald report, which the Premier said he was going to implement lock, stock and barrel—perhaps one could say that the lock is pretty rusty, the stock is broken and the barrel is blocked. I have read the part of the Fitzgerald report that refers to Parliament and I have had discussions with some of the other Speakers in Australia. I thought that maybe in this country—and I am not talking about Queensland alone—the stage might soon be reached at which, having read the Fitzgerald report, the political parties of Australia might agree that, on being elected as Speaker of a Parliament, a person should immediately resign from his political party and take no further political part. That imposes on the Government of the day a very, very real responsibility. If a person is required to resign from his political party upon his election as Speaker, that should not mean that his electorate is immediately disfranchised. It means that the Government should be looking at that Speaker's electorate and making sure that everything there is as clean as a whistle and sparkling like a new pin. If that were to happen, in the eyes of the community our stocks as parliamentarians in Australia would shoot upwards immeasurably. However,

the stupidity of the strict discipline that is imposed upon all members of political parties stops that from happening.

Those members of this Parliament who seek to represent their electorates fairly and honestly have felt the restrictions of the party discipline. It is not so in other countries. Sure, there is a need for a Government of a party. Sure, to maintain stability in Government there should not be people who are hopping across the floor on a whim. There must be some form of party system, but that system should never reach the stage that I felt it had reached in the National Party. That is why I resigned. After reading the Fitzgerald report and making my decision about the reference to the Privileges Committee, moving into the Parliament to make that reference and then surprisingly finding the Government voting en bloc to stop it—I believe that has set back those plans for democracy in this country almost aeons.

Because it is relevant, let me quote part of the Fitzgerald inquiry report—

“In order to be an effective forum, Parliament must have sufficient resources to enable it properly to research topics and evaluate Government proposals. Parliament can easily be prevented from properly performing its role by being denied time”—

and I emphasise the word “time”—

“and resources. Any Government may use its dominance in the Parliament and its control of public resources to stifle and neuter effective criticism by the Opposition.

This can be prevented by mechanisms such as an impartial Speaker. Because of its necessary numerical strength, the Government in a parliamentary democracy is obviously able to change or ignore the rules. In these circumstances the authority and neutrality of the ‘referee’ is of critical importance. The Speaker cannot afford to adopt a partisan role, either voluntarily, or in order to retain the confidence and support of the Government party. If the Speaker enters the arena, there is a risk that Parliament will not be able to make Government accountable.”

The emphasis should be on the second-last sentence, which states—

“The Speaker cannot afford to adopt a partisan role. . . .”

Today I could have easily—quite easily—adopted a partisan role on Mr Burns’ letter. One of the scenarios that I discussed with another Speaker from another place was that I should stand in my place and say, “Honourable members, I have received this letter from Mr Burns. In it he accuses the Premier of misleading the Parliament. He refers to a matter of which I have some knowledge. I believe, however, perhaps that the Premier did not understand the Deputy Leader’s question and I now give him the opportunity to rephrase his answer.” What would have been the result of that? Immediate confrontation between the Premier and the Speaker.

As I was endeavouring to set the scene in this House today for a rational, logical debate on the Fitzgerald inquiry, I believed that for me to embark upon that course and promote that sort of confrontation would have been miles away from not only the intent of the Fitzgerald inquiry but also the sense of the impartiality of the Chair. So I adopted that policy. The vote having been taken, I also could have easily said to myself, “Well, that is the will of the Parliament; let’s get on with the business.” I could easily have said that, but in my view that would have been the action of a weak person and a person who does not have the confidence and courage of his convictions, and I am not that sort of a person.

I have been saddened indeed, Mr Woodward, by the remarks made by some of the honourable members in this debate. For Mr Ahern to stand up in here and accuse me of conspiracy, when it was he who stole the leadership of the National Party in 1987, really is incredible. For him to stand up here and put forward the proposition that it was some political stunt really is belittling the position of Premier.

I was disappointed with the remarks made by the member for Albert, who accused me of being consumed with hate, and he has obviously convinced the majority of the Government members of that. Those Government members, however, and others on

the other side of the Parliament who know me know that I am not a person who is consumed with hate at any time.

**Mr Scott:** He did tell the House what was important to him.

**Mr POWELL:** Yes, he did.

I am not a person who harbours grudges. I have no personal animosity towards Mr Ahern. I believe that I have never shown any hatred of or dislike to Mr Ahern, and I invite any honourable member to honestly present to me an instance in which I have. In this House I have attempted to rule with absolute impartiality. So I am disappointed with the attitude of Mr Gibbs. I just do not understand the remarks that he makes.

The other issues that I suppose I could canvass relate to the time when a special meeting of the parliamentary National Party was called to discuss the issue of teachers who had been convicted of drug abuse being allowed back into the class room. Again I was accused of some conspiracy to destroy Mr Ahern on the eve of a by-election. We are all members of Parliament. I think we all understand the machinations of politics. If I had been seeking to, as it was put, roll Mr Ahern, would I not have kept all that quiet until after he had been defeated at the by-election, which was a fait accompli, anyhow? It is again nonsense to suggest that I in any way stage-managed that.

I have been accused of faxing 19 letters from my electorate office, one to each of the Ministers and one to one of the news media outlets. Fortunately, I was able to retrieve from my fax machine in my electorate office the fax machine report of the fax numbers to which the letter was sent, which proves that it went only to Cabinet Ministers. We had some problem obtaining the fax machine number of the office of the Minister for Community Services. Ultimately, after a number of attempts, my secretary rang his office and his staff said, "Send it to the departmental fax machine because Mr Katter's is inoperable."

Once again, I was accused of some machiavellian conspiracy. I deny it utterly and totally. For the life of me, I cannot understand how any conservative Government could even think of re-employing in a class room a person who had been convicted of drug abuse. When that meeting was taking place, two Ministers were recorded coming into the Parliament. One of them, the Minister for Land Management, called me a traitor. A traitor to what, to whom? A traitor to children? I had decided after the letter had been leaked that I would not shut up about it but rather would explain to the media why I had made those remarks. Is that the act of a traitor?

The Minister for Mines and Energy said that because I had threatened to resign, he was finished with me. I might remind the Honourable Minister that in the period before he became a Minister, he threatened to resign from the National Party because the Minister for Education at that time would not site a school in his electorate. In fact, the department had decided to site the school at Woree but Mr Tenni believed it should be at Smithfield. Frankly, he was right; it should have been situated at Smithfield. Eventually that is where it was built. Subsequently, the school at Woree was constructed.

**Mr Tenni:** That is not right.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Tenni, I have the newspaper clippings. I believe I wrote you a letter that enclosed the newspaper clippings recording what you said.

**Mr Tenni:** You know damned well that I was promised that school when the first high school was built at Smithfield.

**Mr POWELL:** And you threatened to resign if it did not happen.

**Mr Tenni:** Of course I did at that time.

**Mr POWELL:** There you are.

Was the Minister dragged before the party room and threatened with disendorsement and censured? Of course he was not; nor ought he to have been. I defended his right to

do what he did because I thought that was the right and proper stand for him as a member of Parliament to take. Of course, there is a different set of rules now.

I could go on for some time instancing a number of examples. A person is not a Minister of the Crown for five years without seeing and knowing a lot of things. I will say this: I did not know of any corruption within the Government. I am certain that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen knew of no corruption within the Government. I believe it certainly took place—that has been proven. People who seek to be corrupt obviously are very clever in hiding what they do. Any honourable member who heard the Acting Commissioner of Police on radio today could not but have been impressed by his sincerity and honesty. If I had known of corruption taking place, I can assure the Parliament that I would have done everything I could to outlaw it.

If parliamentary democracy is to survive in this country—and I am not just talking about Queensland—there must be checks and balances. There must be the opportunity for private members of Parliament to stand in their places and closely examine the Executive Government in the Parliament. Private members of Parliament must be confident that they will get accurate and complete answers from members of Executive Government. The accusations made by Mr Burns in a letter to me that the Premier of this State misled Parliament is one of the most serious accusations that could be made against any Minister of the Crown or any other member of this Parliament. It ought to be dealt with, and ought to have been dealt with, by the proper committee of the Parliament.

In his report, Mr Fitzgerald refers to parliamentary committees. While this Parliament and any other in Australia operate with the same strict party discipline that has been exemplified here—not only today but during the last two or three months—then the committee system cannot work. The committee system cannot work while a member of Parliament has his eye firstly to serving a party rather than an electorate and the Parliament. For a Parliament to be able to operate in the best traditions of the Westminster system, a day in every week ought to be set aside for private members.

If the performance of this Parliament and the number of hours it sits are examined, you will find that there is an enormous span of hours. In fact, the Queensland Parliament probably sits a greater number of hours per year than any other Parliament in Australia, but it sits fewer days. We have these nonsensical, stupid late-night sittings that go through until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. There is no sense in that at all. In my view, the Parliament should sit more frequently for fewer hours each day. It should have a regular half day set aside—probably a Tuesday night—for private members. I thought I had convinced the previous Premier of that when I was Leader of the House, but in the end result that was not followed through. I am disappointed that it was not, because I think it would be very profitable for private members and, indeed, for Ministers. Most members would know that while I was a Minister, I enjoyed question-time immensely.

**Mr Hamill:** We found it boring.

**Mr POWELL:** I have no doubt the honourable member for Ipswich found the time that I was a Minister boring because he did not like the answers I gave to the questions he asked.

That aside, it is important that if there is to be proper parliamentary democracy and accountability—and it falls on all honourable members to achieve this—the committee system in this Parliament must be upgraded and days set aside for private members. I am not at all enthusiastic about the recommendation made by Mr Fitzgerald that there be a committee of back-benchers who will be more important and have more sway than a Minister. That is not in accordance with the proper lines of the Westminster system of parliamentary accountability. What is proper is to have the necessary structures in place so that private members have the opportunity to ask Ministers questions.

There are few honourable members left in this House who entered Parliament at the same time as I, and there will probably be fewer after the next election, but some of those members may remember that back-benchers were flat-out getting a Minister to

talk to them, even though they were members of the Government party. At that time there were only 11 members in the Opposition, 69 on the Government side and two Independents, Mr Aikens and Mr Casey.

**Mr Casey:** They wouldn't even let you sit at the same table as the Ministers.

**Mr POWELL:** That is correct, members could not sit at the same table as the Ministers. Ministers would not answer questions and were not fussy about answering correspondence, and, as a result, back-benchers would ask questions in Parliament.

**Mr Tenni:** I came in when you came in, and you could sit with a Minister and have a meal with him any time you wanted to.

**Mr POWELL:** Possibly the honourable member for Barron River could do so, but a few members could not.

In those days all the questions were on notice and members had to jump. There was no roster system and a member had to stand up and say, "Mr Speaker". If that member had an important question that he wanted to ask, he would see the Speaker beforehand in order to attract his attention and be sure to get the nod. I thought that was an excellent system. The honourable member for Peak Downs and I vied with one another as to who asked the most questions. Members of all parties and the private members of Parliament should be able to jump to their feet, ask penetrating questions and expect to receive proper answers; not long-winded dissertations. It would do members of this Parliament good to watch question-time in the House of Commons and see the quick-fire rapport that exists between the back-benchers and the Ministers. In the House of Commons the questions asked are not long-winded, boring, damn things with three, four or even 10 parts to them.

**Mr McPhie:** Or 16 or 18.

**Mr POWELL:** Yes, or 16 or 18.

The Minister answers the question quickly and succinctly. The British Prime Minister spends a quarter of an hour for two days a week in the House of Commons and on one occasion during a quarter of an hour she got through 20 questions and destroyed most of the questioners.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That's a very conservative view.

**Mr POWELL:** I do not retract for one moment from the proposition that I am conservative in my views.

Today this House has a serious matter on its plate. Personally I have no animosity towards any particular member of this Parliament. However, earlier this year on my return from Great Britain, I was disappointed to find that the major criterion being used by some members of Parliament to decide whether or not a person was a good Speaker was the number of members of the Opposition he tossed out of the Chamber. I believe that I have failed as Speaker if I reach the stage where I have to eject a member from the House. In the cut and thrust of debate there must be give and take. Sometimes members on each side of the House get heated and excited about various matters that are raised, and that is proper. It is also proper that the Speaker in the chair does everything he can to maintain decorum in the Parliament and stop members becoming unruly and, if a member challenges the Speaker, then that member must be dealt with in a disciplinary fashion. I firmly believe that I have failed in my job of Speaker when I have ordered a member from the Chamber.

Tonight honourable members should think as parliamentarians and not as politicians. I hate the term "politician". Members must consider the Parliament, the people they represent and the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report. When members vote they will do so in a secret fashion and on a parliamentary basis.

**Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (9.52 p.m.):** I rise to speak in this debate this evening because I have been involved in some of the day's events. I confirm that the matters

referred to by the former Speaker concerning my discussions with him are correct. This morning the National Party met and following lunch it is customary for me to meet with the Premier on a day when Parliament is sitting.

I entered this Chamber on the ringing of the first bells, which ring to summon members to the Chamber seven minutes before half past 2. Before the ringing of the second two-minute bells, I was told by an attendant that the Speaker wished to speak to me. I went to his room and, as outlined, he indicated that he intended to refer a letter to the Privileges Committee for consideration and determination. I indicated to him that possibly I would not move the motion. I returned to the Chamber and discussed the matter with my colleagues. At that time the bells were still ringing before Mr Speaker took the chair.

**Mr Comben:** You discussed it with the Premier and Mr Austin.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes.

When the Speaker recommended that the matter be put to the Privileges Committee, I indicated that I would not be standing in my place to move the motion. The Leader of the Opposition moved the motion. I was most surprised when the motion was put. There were a number of voices calling "Aye".

**Mr Comben:** A large number.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** A large number of voices on the Speaker's left-hand side called out "Aye". On his right-hand side there was at least one distinct voice—I believe there were more—that quite clearly called "No".

**Mr Comben:** Mr Austin and yourself.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I would like to correct the matter. I did not call. The member for Mackay disagrees with the recollection of the member for Windsor. He agrees with my recollection.

**Mr Comben:** Fine. I accept that.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I will try to get the events in this Chamber quite clear. The Speaker then called, "I think the 'Ayes' have it."

**Mr Comben:** He quite distinctly did.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** He distinctly made that call. The events were not rushed. Then the Leader of the House called "Divide". I accept that the then Speaker, Mr Powell, said that he was certain it was going to be carried and he had not time to put the question again.

In my time in this place, I have no recollection of a Speaker ever calling against the Government, except by mistake. In that case, in the confusion, the question was very quickly reput. The actions of Mr Powell were rather deliberate. I should say that I accept his version of the events, that is, that "Divide" was called.

**Mr Innes:** What difference does it make?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** It is a long-standing tradition that the Speaker calls the vote in favour of the Government of the day. That is a long-standing Westminster tradition.

**Sir William Knox:** That is rubbish.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Since I have been in this House it is always a member on the opposite side of the House who has called against the Leader of the House. That is a long-standing Westminster tradition. I thought I heard the former Speaker say that he would have reput the question. Perhaps he thinks that it is a tradition, too.

What are the ramifications of this? The House then made a determination. Parliamentary history quite clearly shows that the House is the master of its own destiny.

This House has a Privileges Committee, but many Australian Parliaments do not have standing parliamentary privileges committees.

**Mr Comben:** Which one?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member will have to find that out for himself.

In some Parliaments a privileges committee is formed only when a matter of privilege is raised.

**Mr Casey:** You may be wrong again.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I have a habit of opening my mouth and making statements, but I tell the Chamber that some Australian Parliaments adopt that practice.

Sir William Knox said later that the Parliament does not have to take any notice of the Privileges Committee and that it is possible for the Parliament to decide otherwise. He made the point very strongly that the Parliament is the master of its own destiny. Here today the Parliament made a decision and that decision was that the matter would not be referred to the Privileges Committee.

Aside from the facts, I will put an interpretation on what could have been happening. I will put forward my views. The Premier would have had ample opportunity to explain his version of events, as he later did, and, if it so desired, the House could have taken action on the floor of this Parliament. However, if the matter was referred to the Privileges Committee, its report has to be made to the Parliament. There has been speculation for some time that Parliament may not sit next week or the week after. The members of the Privileges Committee have no right to speak about their findings to the media or anybody else outside. Having looked at it, they could not say that the matter was frivolous, that therefore it is closed and that the book is shut. If Parliament is not sitting, the members of that committee must remain silent until the committee makes its report to the House.

Had the matter been referred to the Privileges Committee, immediately the House shut down there would have been calls for the Premier to resign, to stand down. The call would have been, "He has been accused of lying. Therefore, he should vacate his office immediately." Everybody knows that we are in election mode. That is why I put that scenario. I am not saying that it would have happened, but it was a possibility. In New South Wales the call went out for Wran to stand aside. After some time and after very serious allegations were made against him, Wran was forced to stand aside. I say that there is a coalition on the other side of this Chamber. I say that because even Fitzgerald referred to the "opposition parties". Therefore, I could see the damage that was going to be done politically by such a trivial matter. To raise the matter now in the manner that it has been raised is nothing but political opportunism.

I wish to allude to a number of other matters. Tonight, on TV, Mr Powell stated—I believe that he also stated it in this House—that the meeting between Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Sir Edward Lyons and him was arranged six to eight weeks ago. My understanding of his statement on TV was that those gentlemen were to meet him for dinner at some time when Parliament was sitting. I point out that at that time the Government did not know that Parliament would be sitting today. Under the provisions of a special adjournment, I am certain that the motion is that Parliament be recalled by Mr Speaker in conjunction with the Government.

On 5 June, in a press release, Mr Ahern announced that the Fitzgerald report into illegal activities and associated police misconduct would be made public on 3 July. It was stated that that would be followed by a special recall of Parliament to debate the report on 5 July. A day or two after that Mr Speaker would be advised that that was the date that Parliament should be recalled. I question the discrepancy between the six to eight weeks claimed by the former Speaker and the date of that press release. I do not wish to make accusations. However, his statement appears to be inconsistent with that press release.

**Mr Casey:** We were aware then that the Parliament was going to be sitting today.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** We were not aware six to eight weeks ago when the Fitzgerald report was being presented to the Speaker.

From statements made by Sir Joh that something would occur in this Chamber today, it is obvious that he was aware of the events that have taken place.

The former Speaker resigned from the chair of his own volition. He could easily have put the question to the House for determination without his recommendation. He should have put the question to the House without a recommendation so that the House could decide. In that case, he would not be involved in the political consequences that would follow. However, he resigned of his own volition. If Opposition members interpret that to mean there was a dastardly plot by the National Party to shift Speaker Powell from the Speaker's chair, they overestimate our perception of the matter. Government members did not have a clue what was going on until just before it occurred.

I draw to the attention of the House matters raised by the former Speaker when he was asking honourable members to vote for him. He indicated that he had certain strong views on the Standing Orders of the Parliament and the way in which they should operate. I do not disagree altogether with what he was saying. From time to time, Parliament should consider the rights of back-benchers to raise issues and so on. However, let us look at the record. The honourable member has been chairman of the Standing Orders Committee for a period. He has also been on that committee as Leader of the House. Although he might raise these issues today, I do not recall him speaking on previous occasions with the vehemence that he did today. When he was the chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, which makes recommendations to the Parliament, he could have urged that changes be brought about. He indicated that he endeavoured to talk the former Premier into changing Standing Orders, which I do not doubt. However, it is hypocritical to suggest that the Standing Orders will be changed if he is elected as Speaker of the House.

The former Speaker criticised the lateness of the hour that the Parliament sits. I do not disagree with him on that issue. However, if honourable members look at the record, they will discover that while the former Speaker was the Leader of this House the Parliament sat on more late nights than it has under the present regime.

**Mr Powell:** No, we didn't.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I believe that the Parliament sat later hours. Most honourable members have told me that they believe the Parliament now sits more reasonable hours. I dismiss that particular argument.

The proposition was put forward that if an independent Speaker makes a recommendation to the House that is not accepted, he must resign. I will refer to a quotation that is often made in this House regarding the Speaker. I believe that Speaker Powell made the statement himself as a member speaking in the Chamber, or perhaps as Speaker. The quotation has been used by Speakers on many occasions since 1642 when Speaker Lenthall was Speaker during the reign of Charles I and when King Charles stormed Parliament and demanded that the House submit five members of Parliament. The King turned to the Speaker and said, "Are there any of these persons in the House?" The Speaker replied with the following now famous words—

"May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place except as the House is pleased to direct me."

Mr Speaker, if he is going to be truly independent, listens to the vote in the House. He accepts the vote in the House. If he is going to be a truly independent Speaker, he has to accept the vote in the House. The House made a determination. It is not for him to enter into the debate. So he resigned his position, which he had every right to do. However, let us face it, an independent Speaker listens to the vote and his position is completely neutral.

A number of statements have been made, and I know that the history books and the records do come back to haunt us at times. However, I think some of the records should be read in regard to what some people have said. On 15 October 1987 the then Minister for Education issued a press release. The press release, which was headed, "Burns suspended for disrespect", states—

"It should be made clear that the Deputy Labor Leader was suspended from State Parliament today for disrespect of the Chair', Leader of the House, Lin Powell, said today.

'Mr Burns, the member for Lytton, showed blatant disrespect for the Chair, that is of the position of the Speaker, Mr Lingard, and all that that position represents', Mr Powell said.

His deserved suspension for 14 days has nothing to do with the Fitzgerald inquiry or any other matter on which he may care to perform his usual grandstanding act. The Speaker explained to him yesterday why a particular question was taken from the notice paper of Parliament and apparently Mr Burns had accepted that. But in the meantime he had decided to grandstand on the issue and the motive was obvious, as he continually looked to the press gallery during his act in the House. Perhaps he has found the fish are biting in the bay. Mr Burns has disgraced himself, his party, the Parliament and his electorate, which will be without representation in the Parliament for 14 days.

Since Mr Lingard's elevation to the position of Speaker he has been praised in many circles for his impartiality, his humour and his strength. His performance has been far above that of the Opposition, whose performance has been regarded as weak and worthless."

That was from Lin Powell, MLA, Minister for Education. So if any tributes need to be paid to the National Party nominee this evening, I recommend that honourable members read the commendations that were made by the then Minister for Education, Lin Powell.

I will read another tribute to the National Party nominee on 12 March 1987 during the Address in Reply debate, which is recorded in *Hansard*. Mr Goss stated—

"In rising to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I first of all congratulate the National Party on its victory at the last election. I think it is fair to say that it was a commendable effort and that never before in Australian political history. . ."

and so on. He continued—

"In addition, I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. I also mention particularly the new Speaker, the member for Fassifern, whose election was the subject of much comment. I think it is fair to say that in his position the Speaker has conducted himself admirably and that the House is running much more smoothly in the conduct of its business than it did in the previous three years."

In addition, on 7 October 1987, the Honourable L. W. Powell, member for Isis and Leader of the House, stated—

"The privilege of Parliament has been won over many, many years after much debate and evolution. Honourable members of this Parliament ought to take some note of the history of how the privilege of Parliament has been achieved. That privilege extends to each and every one of us. In each case we need to use that privilege in the proper and correct manner.

In the time that I have been in this place it has been my unfortunate experience to see some members—a very small minority of members—abuse the privilege of Parliament. They have stood in this place and used the privilege of the Parliament to abuse people without foundation and to bring some people into disrepute. That is why the Parliament has a Select Committee of Privileges and that is why you, Mr Speaker, have such an important role to play in watching the privilege of the Parliament."

A number of other remarks were made by honourable members. This is what Mr Innes had to say on 2 December 1987—

“Mr Lingard made an obvious and disastrous political career mistake, but he ran a good Parliament and we all recognise that. If this House is to have dignity, a person who runs a good Parliament is needed. Mr Lingard did that with fairness and dignity.”

On that occasion Mr Lingard had the support of the Leader of the Liberal Party and now he finds that he is not a fit and proper person to occupy the chair.

**Mr Beard:** No, we don't find that at all.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Okay. I know that on that occasion Mr Innes supported Mr Lingard and I understand that he has now had a change of heart.

On the same date, 2 December 1987, Mr Ardill stated—

“He would make an excellent Speaker, as would the Opposition's nominee, the member for Bundaberg.

Another member who brought great dignity to the Chamber, at least in the 10 months of his office, is the former Speaker, Mr Lingard. After all I had heard about the ridiculous performances in this Chamber, I was pleasantly surprised to see the dignity that Mr Lingard brought to this House. Until the time that Ministers and cronies of the Government commenced to receive mentions up at the other end of George Street, Mr Lingard occupied that chair with great dignity and in the time-honoured traditions of the Westminster system. At that time I believe that he received his riding orders and that, subsequent to that, some of his decisions were slightly astray. However, he still brought great dignity to the position. I, for one, am disappointed to see him leave it.

The alternative promoted by the National Party”—  
and that was Mr Powell—

“would be the least fit person in this Chamber to occupy the high office of Speaker with dignity. Mr Powell has shown a pettiness and quirky sense of humour which has led to all sorts of problems in this Chamber over the past 12 months. My most treasured memory of Mr Powell is the day that he walked into the Chamber. . .”

I will not repeat what was said there, but later on he said—

“Mr Powell has shown his contempt for the Parliament, its traditions and its members.”

They are not my words; they were the words of two Opposition members. Obviously, without any reason they have suddenly changed their minds about the nomination. The seat is vacant. A motion of no confidence in the Speaker was not moved by the National Party. The Speaker of his own volition vacated the chair. The seat is now vacant. I challenge Opposition members to recognise the comments that they made earlier. Are they sincere or are they not? Did they make their comments with their tongues in their cheeks? Did they mean what they were saying?

I think that the comments I have made in this debate need to be recognised by all members in this Chamber. As I said earlier, Mr Lingard had no indication of his nomination as Speaker. It was not until lunch-time, 2.30 or probably at a quarter to three this afternoon that he could possibly find himself being nominated for the position of Speaker. None of us had any indication that that would be the turn of events.

**Mr Hamill:** There was plenty of other speculation around that it might have been on.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** We were not aware of that. I can speak for my colleagues to whom I have spoken. We had no indication of that. I do not know whether the former Speaker, Mr Powell, had any intention of resigning as Speaker. If he thought that he was going to do that, I received no indication of it. Honourable members can only go on the facts before them. The position is vacant.

In the past, Opposition members have spoken in glowing terms about Mr Lingard's position as Speaker. He resigned the chair of his own volition. The chair is vacant now. There is no reason why Mr Lingard should not have the total support of honourable members, as I believe he will when the vote is taken later this evening.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns) (10.18 p.m.):** It is a very interesting debate tonight. In fact, it is ironic that the previous Speaker began addressing honourable members this afternoon by saying that we ought to have a return to genuine debates in this Chamber. Lo and behold, in a way not envisaged by him we are experiencing a genuine debate, and I think that is good.

The comments made by the former Speaker, Mr Powell, have put to rest that absurd conspiracy theory that was propounded this afternoon by Government members. After listening to Mr Powell, I think that all Government members ought to admit just how stupid and silly the argument was and how mindless they must seem. What they really ought to do is reconsider their position, because they have themselves locked into an absolutely indefensible position that they will never be able to justify in the media, in the public arena or anywhere else. In fact, they are looking quite foolish, and so they should, because of the position they adopted this afternoon.

The member for Lockyer, who has just spoken, endeavoured to counter the arguments put forward by Mr Powell. I am certain that everybody would agree with me that the honourable member was not very convincing at all. Some of the arguments he advanced really did not relate to the topic at all. They were irrelevant to the issue before us. They certainly did not convince me. I do not think that the arguments convinced any honourable members. I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was not very convincing. He referred to the Westminster system and the way in which Opposition members do not pay regard to the Westminster system. He referred also to the Westminster convention whereby it is traditional for the Speaker to call the voices in favour of the Government. I put it to honourable members that that is not a Westminster tradition. If that is a Westminster tradition, I ask someone to tell me where that is printed or where it has ever been stated. It may be a National Party tradition. It may even be a Queensland tradition; I do not know. I think it is more likely to be a National Party tradition, because the tradition since I became a member of this Chamber—I am certain that it goes back a long time before then—was that the National Party would install in the chair a person who would support it, a person who would take orders from it. For years we have had the spectacle of a person in the chair looking for his orders from the Leader of the House or from the Premier.

**Mr Eaton:** In other words, a yes-man.

**Mr De LACY:** A yes-man for the Government.

Of course, Government members have deduced from that that it is a tradition for the Speaker to call always in favour of the Government. I put it to honourable members that that is not a tradition. It certainly would not be a tradition in the mother Parliament in Britain. The British Parliament has an independent Speaker who would call the vote the way in which he heard it.

Having made that point and talking about Opposition members not wanting to observe Westminster traditions, Mr FitzGerald went on to speak about other Westminster traditions that he believed ought to be followed. Earlier, the Premier referred to the Westminster system. He said that Opposition members would not agree with the Westminster system. At the same time he gave us his new and novel interpretation of Westminster tradition, that is, that the Premier should never be called before the Privileges Committee. What an incredible Westminster tradition that is, particularly during the week of the release of the Fitzgerald report, in which reference is made to accountability! Every second word from the Premier is about accountability. He says that the by-word of his Government is going to be "accountability". However, he can stand up in this Chamber and say that it is wrong, it is improper and it is not a Westminster tradition for the Premier to be called before the Privileges Committee. As somebody else said in

this debate earlier, the one person who must be most accountable to the Parliament is the Premier. Everybody should be accountable to Parliament, and there is no way that there should be diminished accountability on the part of the Premier. That the Premier made that comment and was supported by the Government Whip leads me to believe that Government members do not really understand what the Westminster system is about. Certainly they have not got the message in the Fitzgerald report. Everybody should be accountable to Parliament, and there is no way that there should be diminished accountability on the part of the Premier. That the Premier made that comment and was supported by the Government Whip leads me to believe that Government members do not really understand what the Westminster system is about. Certainly they have not got the message in the Fitzgerald report.

It is absolutely incredible that honourable members are electing a new Speaker on the very day that they have assembled to debate the Fitzgerald report. That long-awaited report is supposed to provide a blueprint for a new accountable era in Queensland that will do away with the corruption and cronyism of the past and make Parliament and the Westminster system work.

The Fitzgerald report talks about a new parliamentary committee system, the need for an independent Speaker and a variety of other things that have been identified by Commissioner Fitzgerald as absolutely fundamental if we are to clean up this State and attack the root cause of the corruption that has made our State the laughing-stock of Australia.

This is the first opportunity that members of the Government have had to show that they have got the message and that they understand what the Fitzgerald report means. Today was their opportunity to say, "Right, there has been an allegation that the Premier misled Parliament. It has been put to the Speaker that he ought to do something about it." Tonight the Speaker explained why he thought it was not proper for him to make a judgment and why he suggested that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee.

Government members talk about the Westminster system. If the Speaker suggests that an issue be referred to the Privileges Committee, it should be automatic that the Government supports that suggestion, the Parliament supports it, the Privileges Committee considers it and, finally, Parliament decides on it. If there is a Westminster tradition, that is the Westminster tradition; not some other nonsense that Mr Fitzgerald, the member for Lockyer, has been talking about.

**Mr White:** It is the "Axe-minster".

**Mr De LACY:** That is right—the "Axe-minster" system; give them the axe.

This afternoon, the Leader of the House, Mr Austin, showed that he is absolutely unreconstructed in the light of the Fitzgerald report, because he said that all that counts is the numbers and that who has the numbers wins.

**Mr Ardill:** He said that in 1983.

**Mr De LACY:** That is what he said in 1983. Honourable members know that he said that and has always believed that.

Today honourable members are assembled to debate the dawning of a new era of democracy and the Westminster system in Queensland. Still, the Leader of the House has not learned the lesson. In fact, I do not believe that any member of the Government has learned the lesson. Those members will pay dearly before this year is out, if they have not paid dearly already.

Let us put to bed the absurd conspiracy allegations that have been made today by the Government. How can Government members possibly sustain those ridiculous arguments? Mr Powell has explained how churlish, childish, nonsensical and illogical those conspiracy allegations are. They reflect the sort of League of Rights background of many members of the National Party who talk about a conspiracy against them.

Today they talked about Sir Joh, "Top Level Ted", the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. Their feverish minds were at work looking for some sort of a plot. There was no plot.

Members of the Opposition would not be that silly to be involved in a conspiracy to get rid of the first Independent Speaker that this Parliament has had in half a century. Why would members of the Opposition be involved in something like that? Because it is not true, it does not make sense. I suppose that it might have sounded good at the time, because the Government needed some justification for its wrong decision.

The breath-taking ineptitude with which members of this Government can approach political questions never ceases to amaze me. Leave aside the principles and morals that are associated with it and the Westminster idea of doing things the right or wrong way. Consider the politics of it. Honourable members are here to discuss the Fitzgerald report and accountability. But what did Government members do on their first opportunity to prove their bona fides? They blew it! What are the people going to say if we get rid of an independent Speaker?

The Fitzgerald report states—

"Any Government may use its dominance in the Parliament and its control of public resources to stifle and neuter effective criticism by the Opposition."

Mr Fitzgerald, QC, has identified that as a problem in our system and one of the root causes of corruption and the break-down in the system. He said—

"This can be prevented by mechanisms such as an impartial Speaker."

He goes on to elaborate on that.

For the first time that I can remember this House had an impartial Speaker—an Independent Speaker—who does not belong to a political party. The Government is moving in such a way as to replace that Independent Speaker with a party hack.

Today honourable members must make a choice between the member for Fassifern and the member for Isis. Mr FitzGerald, the member for Lockyer, has been quoting excerpts from *Hansard* wherein he presumes to prove that, 18 months ago, the Opposition opposed Mr Powell when he was nominated as Speaker. The member for Lockyer is dead right. The Opposition did oppose Mr Powell's nomination. I certainly opposed it, and I am surprised that Mr FitzGerald did not read out what I said about Mr Powell.

**Mr Austin:** That's coming.

**Mr De LACY:** Read it out. Because of his record as the Minister for Education, I was implacably opposed to Mr Powell as a Speaker. I had no confidence at all that he would be a good Speaker. I said that in this House. That is what I believed at the time, and that is what all of my colleagues believed at the time.

**Mr Austin:** You said some shocking things.

**Mr De LACY:** I may have. In a minute I will say some more shocking things. However, all of my colleagues and I have been pleasantly surprised by Mr Powell's performance in the Speaker's chair.

**Mr Stephan:** That isn't what you said a couple of weeks ago. You didn't say that a couple of weeks ago.

**Mr De LACY:** If the honourable member wants to argue that I did not say that a couple of weeks ago, he should stand up and do so, because that is not the case.

During the last 18 months, on the basis of his performance, I have changed my opinion of Mr Powell. He has been a relatively impartial Speaker. In addition to that, he has been a very competent Speaker. As was demonstrated today, Mr Powell is a very competent person.

When a Speaker is relatively impartial, competent and knows Standing Orders, he is a good Speaker. That is the reason why the Labor Party is supporting Mr Powell: he is impartial and he is competent. If the honourable member says that I have changed my view, I have. However, I have changed it in the light of the evidence that is before me. If the honourable member reads to this House my comments about Mr Powell, I hope that he also reads my comments about Mr Lingard, because I do not share what appears to be a fairly widely held opinion that Mr Lingard was a good Speaker. I believe that, as a Speaker, he was a disaster. I believe that he was very little different from his predecessors. He probably brought a little bit more marginal intellectual ability to the position. But as far as being impartial and as far as trying to raise the tone of the Parliament, he was a disaster. I said that at the time, and I say it again now. I believe that if he is once again ensconced in the Speaker's chair, he will be there only to do the bidding of the Government, which is what he did before. This Parliament will go backwards, not forwards.

**Mr Sherrin:** That is not what your colleagues have said.

**Mr De LACY:** I said that some people may have had a different opinion. I am offering my opinion. I stated it before, and I am stating it again now.

Although some of my colleagues said that Mr Lingard was okay, they meant that he was an improvement on his predecessor. If any honourable members can remember John Warner they will know what we in the Opposition mean when we say that Mr Lingard was an improvement on his predecessor.

I became a member of Parliament in 1983 when John Warner was the Speaker. I sat at the back of the Chamber near where Mr Ardill is now sitting. I used to sit beside Tom Veivers. As honourable members know, in his heyday Tom Veivers was a test cricketer. As a member of Parliament, he used to put everything into cricketing metaphors. Parliament used to be in turmoil day after day. The Speaker had absolutely no control over the House. It was turmoil; it was a disaster and it made us into a laughing-stock. The pressure was obviously getting to Mr Warner. The Opposition had moved a motion with which he could not cope. He had been out of the Chamber and when he came in again Tom Veivers came to me and said, "Look, I just saw the Speaker coming in and he looked to me like he was a batsman going out to face Malcolm Marshall on a wet wicket without a box." That is what John Warner was like.

Then we had the great white hope of the National Party, Mr Lingard. When he came to this place he was destined to be king. He was going to improve the tone, improve the performance of the Speaker.

**Mr McElligott:** At least he had enough sense to wear a box.

**Mr De LACY:** There was not a lot of difference but, as I said, I suppose he picked up a few things.

How much did Mr Lingard improve Parliament? I ask honourable members to cast their minds back. Day after day this Chamber was again in uproar because the Speaker made no effort to administer the Standing Orders in an impartial way. He saw his role as scoring points or working on behalf of the Government and keeping the Opposition down and not allowing it to have a free and a fair go in this House. That is what he did when he was Speaker. He was no good before and he will not be any good the next time, if Government members happen to vote him in.

I might say there will be some other disturbing ramifications if Mr Lingard is elected as the Speaker. His performance not only while he was in the chair but also his whole performance as Speaker was below par and left a lot to be desired. As Speaker he used his office to secure not only a private chauffeur-driven car for himself but also an additional car for his wife. In addition to that, when he left office as Speaker, the Clerk of the Parliament called on him to refund money issued as expenses. The amount was about \$700. It was pointed out to him that that was private expenditure, mainly for meals, and therefore it should be refunded. Mr Lingard acknowledged that and repaid

the money. If that is the kind of standard that was set by Mr Lingard when he was previously a Speaker, on that performance how can we expect Mr Lingard to do the job next time? We are supposed to be in a new era of accountability and yet the Government wants to elect as Speaker a person who performed badly and about whom many questions can be asked about the way in which he conducted himself in his position as Speaker.

In the light of the Fitzgerald recommendations that the Auditor-General ought to increase his surveillance of Ministers and ministerial expenses, I say that that surveillance ought to also include the Speaker, and in the light of the allegations that I have made here today, the Auditor-General ought to have a look at Mr Lingard's performance.

**Mr Borbidge:** Everyone's entitlements.

**Mr De LACY:** Sure. But I am making a specific allegation against Mr Lingard when he was Speaker. I think it is relevant that I make those allegations tonight because this House has to decide whether or not to again elect Mr Lingard as Speaker. I put it to you that with those kinds of allegations hanging over his head, he ought not be the Speaker.

**Mr FitzGerald:** I don't think that's reasonable at all.

**Mr Scott:** That is on your judgment.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That is why you made those allegations against the Premier, to get him to stand aside. It is a political plot.

**Mr De LACY:** I must say that the honourable member for Lockyer carried on earlier with that convoluted argument about why we had made those allegations against the Premier. The reason we made those allegations against the Premier is that it was quite clear from the answer he gave that he was misleading Parliament. He has never taken the opportunity to rectify the situation, so it is right and proper to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee. There was no other reason for it. The honourable member can read into it all the conspiracies he wishes. I suppose there is an element of having the Premier on the run and not backing off or being easy on him, but by the same token there is a process that ought to be followed.

Being the Premier has done terrible things to Mr Ahern. I used to have a lot of time for him because I thought he had some ability.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Mr Goss said he is an honest man. I saw him say that on TV the other night. Do you disagree with that?

**Mr De LACY:** No, not altogether. Let us say that the Premier is an honest man, but I put it to you that there are more dimensions to leadership than just being honest. I am afraid that is probably the only dimension in which he scores.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That is what you are calling into question, isn't it?

**Mr De LACY:** I think that, yes, his answer was less than honest in relation to that question.

As the leader of this Government, today the Premier was very disappointing in his speech in support of Mr Lingard. As I said earlier, I believe that the position of Premier has done terrible things to him. He used to be a decent bloke and a fairly competent person, but he has had so many advisers, so many minders and so many Rambo lessons from Mr Baudino that he cannot find his real self any more. He does not know who he is. One minute he is tough and then, as Mr Powell said, his gesticulations become uncoordinated and unsynchronised.

**Mr Scott:** Not only with his eyes but also with his mind, unfortunately.

**Mr De LACY:** Yes. It really was quite a pathetic performance. "Praise me", he says on television. I heard the argument advanced by the member for Aspley, who said that if we do not praise the Government and acknowledge how good it has been for

introducing the Fitzgerald report, no other Government in Australia will ever undertake a similar inquiry. What a ridiculous and nonsensical proposition. I will put it to honourable members another way. If the findings in the Fitzgerald report reveal widespread and systematic corruption which has eaten into the social fabric of Queensland over the last decade or two, and if the people of Queensland do not throw that Government out, there will be no need for Governments in Australia to ever be honest or non-corrupt. Let me say I do not think that there can be any doubt about the people of Queensland throwing out this Government. They will throw out this Government because they feel absolutely betrayed.

Those of you who are still living the lie and believe that you have an opportunity of winning the next election are obviously living in fantasyland. You must believe in the tooth fairy, because I hear people in the community, including ex-National Party voters among others, saying that they not only have a responsibility but also an obligation to relegate this mob to the scrap-heap of history. That is where you will go and that is where you ought to go because it was the National Party that presided over a break-down in the whole social fabric of Queensland. Make no mistake—you will be remembered collectively as the worst Government in the whole history of Australia. This Government will be remembered for being beset by corruption. Members of the Government will be remembered for nothing except being a corrupt, divisive and miserable Government, which is the way they should be remembered.

It amuses me to hear members of the National Party forsake Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Suddenly Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen is the bogymen; yet not a single member of the Government would ever have been elected without clinging to his coat-tails. Even as recently as the 1986 election, the slogan was “Keep Queensland strong.” All the members of the National Party were running around in those stupid “Joh for PM” T-shirts.

**Mr Warburton:** Mike Ahern had one on.

**Mr De LACY:** Mike Ahern had one on and it was all for Joh. The idea was to get people to vote for Joh and the Nationals. They said that there had never been a greater need. Every single National Party member was there. Day after day members of the Labor Party sat in this Parliament and listened to all their monotonous speeches telling us about how good Joh was and how good the National Party is. Suddenly, Joh is no good. He has been responsible for all the corruption and the break-down in morals, social values and institutions in Queensland. If National Party members only knew how silly and ludicrous they all sound.

**Mr White:** Don't go too easy on them.

**Mr Beard:** Bore it up them.

**Mr De LACY:** Do you reckon I am being too gentle?

**Mr Beard:** Yes, and it isn't like you at all.

**Mr De LACY:** No.

All I can say is that although the National Party is part of the problem, I do not think it will be part of the solution. I suppose that its members have no other position to adopt than to try to say, “We commissioned this report and we are the only Government that has been brave enough to do it.” However, when they said, “What about the other States? They haven't got the courage to do it”, that position was unjustifiable. If members of the National Party think that the other States of Australia are similar to Queensland, they just have not understood the message because other States in Australia do not have corruption that is anything like Queensland's. If you believe that they do, you do not know what this is all about and not only will you be voted out of office, you will deserve to be voted out of office.

**Mr Elliott:** There is no corruption in New South Wales; is that what you are saying?

**Mr De LACY:** I did not say that there is no corruption in New South Wales. I did not say that there was no corruption anywhere else. I simply said that there has not been a total break-down of the institutions of society or a web of corruption and cronyism that has eaten out the heart and soul of society to the extent that has occurred in Queensland.

The members of the National Party have obviously not read the report. In no other State of Australia has the police force received total protection from the Government of the day; no other State of Australia has a gerrymander which protects the Government from full accountability; and no other State has a political system in place that has created something of this kind. If Government members believe that other States are the same as Queensland in terms of corruption and the break-down to which I have referred, they have not got the message or learnt the lesson of Fitzgerald and history and they ought not be here. If National Party members were honourable people they would resign from this Parliament because of what that party has done to Queensland. They would resign and get out with some honour. However, they will be hurled out unceremoniously, which is what they deserve.

I ask Government members: did they read the reference in Mr Fitzgerald's report to using the resources of Government to pay for publicity and so on? In spite of that, on television yesterday and today the Government showed those obscene advertisements saying how great and how good the Premier and the National Party are. These advertisements have all been paid for out of the public purse, which is one of the specific things mentioned in the report as being the root cause of the problem. Government members have not got the message at all; they do not know what the report is all about. The voters at the next election are the only people who will fix them up. Government members will not fix themselves up and are only paying lip-service to accountability. The National Party Government does not know what real accountability means. These advertisements are a shameless use of tax-payers' money for party-political propaganda exercises and, even though Fitzgerald said it was grossly wrong, the Government is still showing them.

What will the Government do about the gerrymander? Already the Government is back-tracking and, if it can get away with it, has no intention of changing the electoral boundaries or of following any of the other recommendations made by Mr Fitzgerald. This Government is simply paying lip-service to his report and has no intention of doing anything.

What about ministerial expenses? Did the Government take a decent look at the ministerial expenses spoken about by Don Lane? Only last week Mr Scott Prasser stated that all the Ministers were abusing the system and putting their hands in the till. This Government has done nothing about this matter or about any other matter that counts. The Premier has simply stood up and said, "We are accountable. Give us credit."

**An honourable member:** Shut the till up.

**Mr De LACY:** Yes, they should have caught their fingers in the till.

Tonight is an historic occasion. Honourable members were called here to debate the Fitzgerald inquiry report, but we have not yet reached that stage. However, the matter that we are now debating is very important. The honourable member for Nundah said that the Government is in turmoil and, when he said that, some Government members giggled. That is a subconscious reaction by those who are nervous.

National Party members are wrong if they do not believe that the Government is in turmoil. I do not know if the Government will last a week or a fortnight—I do not know how long it will be—but in the end it is finished. This Government has been a blot on the political landscape of Queensland for too long and should go. Because of the position the Government has adopted on the re-election of the Speaker, that has been proved today. The Government is presuming to remove the first independent and competent Speaker that this House has had for a couple of decades and replace him with a person whose record is sadly flawed. The Government then pretends that it has

understood Fitzgerald's message. The Government has not got the message and I urge everyone in this Chamber to support the re-election of Mr Powell as an independent and competent Speaker.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders—Minister for Community Services and Ethnic Affairs) (10.50 p.m.): The previous speaker made an uncharacteristic speech; he usually has some substance in his speeches, but it was not present tonight. I wish to staunchly and aggressively defend Mr Lingard against the allegation that he spent \$700 on meals. Any person who is elected to the position of Speaker in this House is obliged to be in this place almost continuously. Guests and visiting dignitaries come in and out and the Speaker is expected to look after them at all times. In addition, the Speaker is the officer responsible for the running of what is a fairly large institution, that is, Parliament and its environs. The Speaker's job is to be here and to carry out that work. If a Speaker is carrying out that work, the meals should be paid for. It has been alleged that this is in some way an improper use of funds, but I believe, on the contrary, that it is a very proper use of funds. I am sure that this matter can be worked out with the Clerk of the Parliament in the forthcoming period.

**Mr De Lacy:** It wasn't proper. He had to pay it back.

**Mr KATTER:** Perhaps there are guide-lines in place to ensure the proper running of Parliament House, and, if such guide-lines exist and they were breached unwittingly, they should certainly be changed. I do not believe that any member on either side of this House would seriously consider that a person who has to spend all of his time here must pay for meals.

I will not go into detail about the events of today. Many members view with very great regret the series of decisions that have been taken by the outgoing Speaker, and many might describe him as inflexible. If members wanted to be nasty, they might describe him as steadfast in his convictions; but, whatever point of view one takes, many of us regret the events of today. If everyone is to be believed, today's events resulted, more than anything else, from a series of misunderstandings.

**Mr Warburton:** That's on your side.

**Mr KATTER:** That is, if people are to be believed, and honourable members can make their own choices as to whether or not they believe them.

In all of the debate that I have heard to date and in all of the things that I have seen in the media, I find it very, very lamentable that no credit has been given to Bill Gunn, whose actions precipitated this report.

**Mr Scott:** He gave himself no credit in the week-end papers.

**Mr KATTER:** I do not think that he should hesitate to talk with some pride of what he has done.

Everyone in this place would agree that there were some very serious problems out there. A Government is not responsible for the cause of problems arising but it is responsible if it does not deal with those problems with some aggression and some ability. Bill Gunn is a man of very great courage. There are a few of us in this place—one of them is the Leader of the Opposition—who know just what courage and determination that the Honourable Minister needed to bring to fruition this report. We are not saying it is perfect. It might have many things wrong with it. It might be deficient in many areas. Regardless of people's view or opinion of the report, the Minister acted with extremely great courage and every single fair-minded and decent person in the State of Queensland must view him with a very great deal of esteem.

**Mr Scott:** I think he is so simple that he did not realise what he was doing.

**Mr KATTER:** That is entirely incorrect. I must deny very strongly what the honourable member has just said.

In the circumstances that then existed, it took not only a very great deal of courage but also a very great amount of intellectual footwork to be able to establish the inquiry. Anybody who went after corrupt police found that the police came after him. Going after corrupt police had to be done in such a way that the person got in first and that the police did not get him before he got them. The honourable member for Cook says that Mr Gunn was stupid, but I will answer that by saying very aggressively that just the opposite is the truth. The nature of the problem very clearly indicated that it took that sort of ability to establish the inquiry so that it could hand down a report.

**Mr Scott:** Was that when Huey was chasing you in Charters Towers?

**Mr KATTER:** No. By making such an irresponsible statement the honourable member is doing the work of the corrupt police officers in this State. John Huey and I worked very closely together. There are few people in the State for whom I have more admiration. I am not saying he is perfect; I am not saying he does not have his shortcomings; all I am saying is that he is a man who showed immense personal courage at very great personal risk to himself.

**Mr Scott:** Is it right that you owe rates to the Croydon Shire?

**Mr KATTER:** I most certainly hope that I do not owe any rates to the Croydon Shire. If any are owing, they will most certainly be paid. That is a stupid interjection. The honourable member is leaving this place, but I hope that he doctors up his act on the way out.

As I was fortunate enough to see some of the unfortunate events that occurred in north Queensland, it would be very wrong of me to stand today without paying a very great tribute to some very, very courageous policemen in north Queensland who literally risked their lives. I do not think that Whitrod's statements that he went in fear of his life were particularly exaggerated. A very large number of police in north Queensland did exactly that. Even at this late stage, because they are still in great danger, they would prefer their names not to be used. So with great regret I will not inform the Chamber of the names of those courageous people. One of them has been mentioned by one honourable member opposite; most people would know about his performance.

**Mr Scott:** You said you were in fear of your life.

**Mr KATTER:** I will not go into details and say that I am some sort of marvellous person. What I am saying to this place tonight is that there were some very, very courageous policemen and some very decent and courageous people who acted at very great expense and risk to themselves in standing up to some of the horrific things that took place.

I must be fair and acknowledge the work done by the Leader of the Opposition, who was one person opposite who took some sort of a stand on these issues, but members of the Opposition are supposed to find out what is going wrong and attempt to expose it. As I said, there was Kevin Hooper and, to some degree, there was a contribution by the Leader of the Opposition. It would be wrong and improper of me not to acknowledge that here this evening. However, on the whole, the work that an Opposition needs to do to keep a watching brief on the actions of this side of the Chamber was not done.

**Mr Scott:** Utter nonsense.

**Mr KATTER:** I challenge the honourable member to name the people who came forward and attempted to expose some of the things that were going on.

**Mr Hamill:** Your analysis is a bit simplistic.

**Mr KATTER:** I have enormous difficulty understanding what the honourable member says. It is not that I will not take his interjections, I simply have difficulty in understanding him.

**Mr Hamill:** What I am trying to say is that you are trying to tell the House that it is the Government's responsibility to pull the rorts and it is the Opposition's responsibility to try to find them.

**Mr KATTER:** No, I am not. I am not abdicating any responsibility. I am asking the honourable member why, if things were going wrong, he was not pointing that out publicly.

As a whole, the media in Queensland did not play the role that it should have. There are some excellent exceptions to that general rule. There has been much criticism of this side of the Chamber. Those honourable members who like reading history books will remember the names of Speaker Pollock, Mr Foley and the Dutton River case, the Mungana scandals, the Marjorie Norval case, the theatre licences cases, the sale of hotel licences and the proliferation in Queensland towns of SP book-makers, who operated quite openly and who at all times were paying money to the police force. That is detailed in the Fitzgerald report, but each of the trails that led up to today started even before our time in office. That is set out very clearly in this red document in front of me. I say to anyone on the Opposition benches who is attempting to adopt a holier-than-thou stance that that is simply not documented in the record of the history of the Labor Party in this State.

**Mr Prest:** It became a growth industry under the National Party.

**Mr KATTER:** I have reeled off a host of things, but we are not in the same league as the honourable member.

Earlier today, the honourable member for Mount Isa got very aggressive. If he read the Fitzgerald report, he would realise that everything talked about in that document started while the Liberals were in coalition. The worst case of corruption that I have heard of in this State in recent years involved a Liberal Minister. Anyone attempting to adopt a holier-than-thou attitude is acting hypocritically and in the face of the facts that have existed in Queensland over the past 40, 50 or 60 years. This Parliament made a real and serious attempt to try to stop those ugly things from occurring any longer.

The previous speaker said that this was a corrupt Government.

**Mr Comben:** It's true. Read the book.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member with the beard has said, "It's true. Read the book." I have read some other books. I read newspapers from Western Australia. The Western Australian Labor Government bought a petrochemical plant project off a gentleman in Western Australia who owed two other gentlemen some money. However, during a recent trip to Western Australia, I was informed by reliable sources—two of them were even from the other side of the political fence—that \$400m was paid for that project. What was the project? Was it a stack of buildings that cost a fortune? Was it a huge conglomerate and complex that was producing wealth? Was it a large group of organised people operating together? It was none of those things. It was 10 hectares of industrial land at Kwinana and a letter—an expression of interest by the Mitsubishi company of Japan. Of that \$400m, \$168m went into the pockets of Laurie Connell and a further \$178m went into the pockets of Alan Bond.

When we talk about corruption in this State and look at the piddling amounts by comparison with one single event that occurred——

**Mr Comben:** You are calling that a piddling amount?

**Mr KATTER:** I am saying by comparison, not objectively or by themselves. They most certainly are not. However, by comparison, one single purchase cost \$400m.

**Mr Vaughan:** You are notorious for expanding figures off the top of your head. You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr KATTER:** Perhaps the information that I have is incorrect. I suggest that the honourable member get in touch with Western Australia and come back to the House

later this evening and inform us if my information is incorrect. In any event, it appeared in all the newspapers in Western Australia.

**Mr Comben:** I think that you should come back and tell us about the Lucas and Sturgess reports and why you didn't act on them.

**Mr KATTER:** I take the interjection on Mr Sturgess, because his name should be mentioned in this House as a man who acted with enormous courage and enormous aggression against corruption in the State of Queensland. He deserves great credit for the stance that he took.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** I take the interjection from my honourable colleague. He was made the Director of Prosecutions for the State. No person in this State had a greater reputation for fighting corruption aggressively and courageously than Mr Sturgess. The Government put him in charge of the biggest division responsible for the prosecution of crime in this State.

**Mr Comben:** You didn't change the law and you didn't pursue the cops.

**Mr KATTER:** If the honourable member is talking about the Lucas commission of inquiry, I am receiving conflicting messages and signals from legal people in Queensland.

I will leave the petrochemical plant project in Western Australia and direct my attention to the Federal Government. I refer to the Skywest/Amann Aviation negotiations. The contract for coastal surveillance for northern Australia was awarded to a company that had no aeroplanes, no money—it was a \$2 company—and consisted of five people who had never flown an aeroplane or been involved in the aviation industry in their lives. Yet they were awarded an important contract for the surveillance of our northern coastline.

No sooner did they get the contract than Skywest, which lost the contract and was very suspicious, went to the United States to find out where their aeroplanes were. When they arrived at the place where the aeroplanes were supposed to be, they were accosted by a private detective, who then had them apprehended by the police. They were put in gaol in the United States for having the temerity to go near the place where the aeroplanes were supposed to be. Amann Aviation, with no aeroplanes, no relationship with the aviation industry and no experience of coastal surveillance, were awarded the contract.

When we asked ourselves why they were awarded the contract, we looked at the names of the people who were involved in it. Amann was friendly with many of the leading Government officers in Canberra. Vanda Russell Gould, the second person involved, was named in Treasury documents as having played a significant, if not prominent, role in the Whitlam Government's loans affair of 1975—the notorious Khemlani affair, as it later became known.

Continental Venture Capital declared that it would have the money to finance the Amann Aviation contract. But who is CVC? It is a company which was entirely controlled by Nigel Stokes, who has been a financial consultant to the Labor Government continuously since 1976, and who has been on the pay-roll of the New South Wales Government continuously from 1976 to the present time.

So the contract was awarded to three cronies—a term often used by Opposition members in this House. However, the story does not end there. A certain other person made a bid for Skywest Aviation. I cannot tell honourable members the exact figures because I do not know them. All I can give honourable members is the hearsay figures that have been bandied around, and I preface my remarks by saying that. However, this purchaser came in and offered Skywest \$20m, it is alleged, to purchase the company. Skywest loses the contract. Skywest is worth absolutely nothing. It has all these aeroplanes that it cannot use. It has to pay them all off and it has no way of paying them all off.

The company is broke. It races back to the purchaser and sells to the purchaser for \$5m, not \$20m as was alleged in the first place.

**An Opposition member:** That was reasonable.

**Mr KATTER:** It was reasonable.

The end of the story is very interesting. Surprise, surprise! The Federal Government decides that Amann Aviation has not got the aeroplanes after all and cannot fulfil the contract and the contract is awarded back to Skywest and one of the great friends of the ALP Government has picked up \$15m in the interim. That is what people are talking about when they talk about corruption.

I will examine quickly some of the wonderful things that the Federal Labor Government skites about. One example is the removal of the tax on pleasure cruisers. That is an extraordinary thing for a socialist Labor Government to do. The Federal ALP Government has introduced 23 new taxes. The only tax that it has removed during its term in office is the tax on pleasure cruisers. That is rather interesting. Why would the Federal Labor Government remove the tax on pleasure cruisers? It was just passing coincidence that two months after the tax on pleasure cruisers was removed, one of the leading friends and financiers of the ALP Government in Australia purchased a major pleasure cruiser in this State and transported it to Western Australia. So once again we find the great and honourable Federal Government acting in a manner that is lining on a massive scale the pockets of its wharfie friends.

I turn to Mr Kornhauser, who was mentioned quite extensively. In fact, I think his is the most extensively mentioned name in this document.

**An Opposition member:** Russell's mate.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member has said that he is Russell's mate. In this regard, the document states—

“By that time, Lewis had become reasonably friendly with Kornhauser and had had discussions with Hinze about his fitness as an applicant for a Casino licence, including comments which had been made to Lewis by the Director of the Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence . . . Lewis amended the draft of that letter to delete reference to a matter contained in the material obtained . . . In his evidence, Lewis acknowledged that the information which was deleted was material for the Treasury's purposes.”

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member says that he is friendly.

Let me also quote Mr Bob Bottom in regard to Mr Kornhauser's connections with Mr Abe Saffron—

“Juanita Neilsen, heiress to the Mark Foy retail empire and publisher of a Kings Cross fortnightly . . . ”

was involved in investigative journalism into the affairs of Abe Saffron. The document continues—

“Mrs Neilsen was a key figure in opposition to a controversial high-rise development in Victoria Street, Kings Cross, and there was also suggestions that she may have been blackmailing Abe Saffron, an allegation which Saffron denied . . . ”

The document also states—

“On Friday morning, 4 July 1975, Juanita Neilsen . . . went to an appointment at a Kings Cross nightclub—and afterwards disappeared.

The disappearance shocked Sydney.

But for the persistence of Reeves the disappearance might have remained simply another entry in police missing-person files.

No inquest was held until more than eight years later, climaxing in November 1983, with an open finding. A jury of six found that, although she had died, it was not possible to say how, when or where she had died.

But the jury added a rider to its verdict: 'There is evidence to show that the police inquiries were inhibited by an atmosphere of corruption, real or imagined, that existed at the time'.

In the months following the Neilsen disappearance, Reeves, accompanied by another journalist Barry Ward, sought to interview Eddie Trigg, night manager of the Carousel nightclub where Mrs Neilsen had last been seen. They went to see Trigg at an associated nightspot, the Laramie Bar. When Reeves said, 'We are following up on the Juanita Neilsen disappearance', Trigg went for the phone. Reeves turned to Ward, 'I believe it's time for us to leave . . . I think he is calling the cavalry'. They left and had walked a few blocks from the Laramie when they were, in effect, abducted and forced to go with Trigg and another man to Darlinghurst Police Station. Reeves and Ward were charged with being 'found drunk' outside the police station. The charges were later thrown out of court."

The point is that in this document Kornhauser is linked inextricably again and again to Mr Abe Saffron, and in this document it is alleged that Russell Hinze is corrupt because he is linked to Kornhauser. This document says that Kornhauser is a person who is linked to organised crime in the United States. It states that one of the partners involved in his operations at the Gold Coast is a significant figure in organised crime in the United States, and those were on the Australian Federal Police files in Australia.

The point that I am coming to, of course, is that Mr Kornhauser was in partnership with Abe Saffron, who is now in gaol. Juanita Neilsen was investigating Abe Saffron and she vanished without trace. The police picked up anyone who was trying to investigate Abe Saffron. Abe Saffron and Kornhauser were in business together and were in business with a person who was identified by the American police and the Australian police as being part of organised crime in the United States.

I will now quote from the quintessential document which is the biography of Robert J. Hawke by Blanche D'Alpuget. Page 266 states—

"Kornhauser was a shrewd businessman and one of Hawke's closest friends."

It continues on page 272—

"At one stage, when Hawke feared his life to be in danger . . . he called on Kornhauser"—

I might add that he says in the book that this is something that he was oft wont to do when he was drunk—

"to ask him to look after Hazel and the children for him if he was murdered. Hawke had no idea what his exact financial situation was, except that he was in debt. He did not know if he had any life insurance policies, for Hazel looked after such matters. Kornhauser recalled—

' . . . we owed him so much . . . I assured him if anything happened to him, Hazel and the children would be cared for.' "

**Mr Scott:** I wouldn't worry too much about that.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member has said that I do not have to worry about that after I have just said that Mr Kornhauser is in partnership with Mr Abe Saffron. Mr Abe Saffron and Mr Kornhauser have as one of their partners a person who is in organised crime in the United States. The American police and the Australian police both agree on that. Apparently the Queensland police agree with that also. If Mr Hinze is indicted by that relationship, then so much more is the Prime Minister of Australia indicted by this document sitting in front of me.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** I am quoting from his own statements and from the official book on Mr Hawke.

Let me move on to the subject of New South Wales. One can obtain a quick glimpse of what corruption is about when one has a quick look at what happened to Juanita Neilsen. Whenever anyone tried to investigate the matter, he was picked up by the police. I do not want to go back over the story again. Whenever anyone tried to investigate the matter, he himself was picked up by the police.

Three books were written by Bob Bottoms, who, I might add, was the press secretary of Leon Punch, the National Party person. Bob Bottoms was the most fearless fighter against police corruption in Australia. I do not think that anyone would dispute that.

**Mr Innes:** It is a singular "Bottom".

**Mr KATTER:** I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party very much for his assistance.

It is important to put on the record this evening a series of quotations from Bob Bottom's book. This person was a migrant in 1948 but had been deported. I refer to an extract from Mr Bottom's book on New South Wales and the New South Wales Government. He referred to Mr Grassby and a person called Mr Barbaro, who was brought into Australia by Mr Grassby.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** I am very pleased to have the honourable member's assistance with pronunciation.

Mr Bottom states—

"His re-entry authorised by Grassby was delayed, according to records in the Rome office of the Immigration Department, because he wanted to bring with him copies of a book written in Italy about Grassby's visit. He arrived in Australia on 5 April 1974 and left 12 days later.

When a furore erupted over the entry permits, Grassby acknowledged that he knew that Barbaro had a criminal record but was not aware of any criminal charges then pending against him in Italy. Barbaro had indicated the purpose of his visit was to see his mother in Adelaide, a point taken up by Neville Wran, when as Premier and Minister of Police, he defended Grassby in 1977 in the NSW Parliament. Ridiculing suggestions that Barbaro was a hardened criminal, Wran drew on NSW police information of only lesser offences against Barbaro"—

ignoring the more serious offences—

"including larceny of a goat, and defended Grassby on the basis that Barbaro had been allowed re-entry to 'see his dying mother'"—

all he had ever done was larceny of a goat—

"'for the last time before she met her Maker'.

In fact, as revealed by Barbaro's own brother, the mother was alive and well in Adelaide"—

in fact, he spent most of his time in Griffith—

"then three and a half years after the re-entry by his brother. Indeed, in November 1976, a year after the Whitlam administration had been dismissed and a government formed by a Liberal-National Party coalition, Barbaro's wife had applied to the then Minister for Immigration, Michael MacKellar, for entry also to see Barbaro's mother. MacKellar later told parliament: 'I sought advice from my department'

. . .

At the time of re-entry, Barbaro in fact had been facing various charges in Italy, including one for assaulting . . . In 1963, five years after he had been deported

from Australia, a charge of homicide against him had been dropped and an amnesty had saved him from a prison term for stealing.

Immediately on his return to Italy, Barbaro was arrested over the mafia kidnapping of the son of an industrialist. Arrested with him was a cousin, Francesco Barbaro, nominated as the mafia 'godfather' of Plati. Giuseppe Niolichia, police chief, was quoted as saying: 'They seem to be honest, but are part of the Aspromonte mafia (Plati is part of the Aspromonte mountain region).

On 19 November 1975 Barbaro was the subject of an Italian denunciation that he was 'socially dangerous and associated with the mafia' and . . . he was sentenced to 'special oversighting'—exile to an island jail—over his role in the mafia kidnapping racket. The Italian press suggested that a major part of the kidnapping money had been deposited in Australian banks and probably invested in the Australian marijuana trade.

In a book published in Italy in 1983 by a mafia expert . . . it was stated that investigations carried out by the Italian police had established that members of the mafia group in Griffith, 'about 100 people all told, had financed their Australian drug production with the proceeds of a series of kidnappings carried out in Italy'. The book stated: 'A proportion of the profits made from the Australian cannabis plantations was returned to Calabria

. . .

The book named meeting places and various identities involved with . . . Barbaro and the kidnappings, including . . . Trimboli, . . . Sergi, . . . Sergi and . . . Mittiga.

During his 10-day visit to Australia, Barbaro had spent only four days in Adelaide and the rest at Griffith and elsewhere. Curiously, in the light of the . . . report . . ."

So we see the extent of the corruption where a major Mafia chieftain from Italy, who is alleged to have been involved in massive kidnappings and the death of industrialists and their sons in Italy, can come to Australia, be brought into the country by Mr Grassby and then stoutly defended by the Premier of the State, Neville Wran. We are talking about corruption and organised crime. I do not have time to refer to Donald Mackay's efforts in trying to expose some of the things that were happening in New South Wales. Donald Mackay's efforts at Griffith tragically resulted in his death. These were not obscure people. Juanita Neilsen and Donald Mackay were very prominent people. No-one was a very great distance away, it would appear, in New South Wales, from the Mafia gun and its protection by the ALP Government in New South Wales throughout that period. No convictions have ever been recorded as a result of any of those deaths, nor have any serious investigations taken place.

I refer those Liberal Party members who may be grinning to the story of the prince and the pauper, which is about the connections between Askin and organised crime in New South Wales. I will not go into detail about that in this House. I do not wish to prolong this debate by talking about Murray Farquhar, Justice Lionel Murphy or any of those people who were at the centre of the ALP organisation and the power base of the ALP in New South Wales.

Who are the corruption-fighters? Who was Bob Bottom working for when he disclosed all of those things? He was the press secretary to Leon Punch, who was responsible for raising most of those issues in the New South Wales Parliament.

I turn now to the Hamer Liberal Party Government of Victoria. I notice that the honourable member for Southport is moving forward in his seat. His predecessor courageously exposed the corrupt land deals that occurred in that State over a protracted period. As honourable members would be aware, Doug Jennings and I were close friends. Doug told me that he went to Hamer and put before him unequivocal evidence that people in the Government, senior departmental officials and senior Ministers had been buying land and, 10 minutes later, selling it at outrageous prices to the Housing Commission in Victoria. Doug put that evidence before Hamer and was ignored. He

left the issue for three or four weeks and went back to Hamer. At that time he said, "Look, surely you have to do something about this. This is evil. This is corruption that is occurring in this State." Once again he was ignored. Two months later he went back to Hamer and said, "I am not fooling with you, Mr Hamer. Unless you present that evidence to the House and action is taken by Tuesday, I am going into the House on Tuesday and that evidence will become a public document." With lofty arrogance Mr Hamer treated Mr Jennings with contempt. On the Tuesday of that week—as good as his word always—Jennings went into the House and published that evidence which destroyed that Government. In fact, as a result, a very large number of Government members ended up in gaol.

Doug Jennings was thrown out of the Liberal Party. Throughout the nation the Liberal Party has a lot to answer for. That was the thanks that Doug Jennings got for exposing the corruption in that Government. His colleague Charles Francis, who was a prominent QC, also was thrown out of the Liberal Party. They were expelled from the Liberal Party for having disclosed the corruption that had occurred and was occurring in that Government. They did that only because they had to do it and because the Premier of that State would take no action whatsoever.

Where did Doug Jennings go? Where did he consider that there was honesty, decency and a place for him? He came straight here and joined the National Party.

I pay great tribute to Mr Fitzgerald for outlining very closely, correctly and diligently what occurred in Queensland. When corruption raised its head in this State many people within the National Party came forward courageously to fight it. Many of them did so at great cost to themselves.

It should be disclosed to the House that I spoke to Mr Jennings on the subject of Russell Hinze. I do not know whether he has done all the terrible things that are stated in the Fitzgerald report. In common with many honourable members, I had heard rumours. However, I ask questions. Mr Jennings, that hammer of corruption who very aggressively pursued corruption, informed me that he had kept files on many people. Those files were numbered. Doug had the only code that existed for those files, and I assume that it died with him. Doug said to me, "I have been closely watching Russell, because I have heard the rumours. I can honestly say that I have not been able to track down anything on him." All I can say is that I feel responsible that if those things occurred, this Government was not able to stop them. No-one would ever question that Doug Jennings was one of the great crime and corruption-fighters in Australia. He was sitting on the doorstep of corruption. Yet at the time of his death he was not able to disclose——

**Mr Vaughan:** Come on!

**Mr KATTER:** I am trying to explain some of the reasons. When did the honourable member disclose one of the incidents that are documented in the Fitzgerald report?

**Mr Comben:** Kev Hooper did that for 10 years.

**Mr KATTER:** I give full marks to Kevin Hooper. Efforts were made, but they were unsuccessful.

I have already mentioned Des Sturgess and I do not intend to mention him again. However, I would like to mention three editors of newspapers in north Queensland. If ever I have seen real, raw courage and journalistic integrity, I saw it from Max Tomlinson, who had to stand by himself, was terrorised by an awful lot of people and suffered greatly.

**An Opposition member:** We are being terrorised by you.

**Mr KATTER:** These are important issues that need to be addressed.

Do honourable members believe that the issue should be handled flippantly? Those people acted with great risk to themselves. I mention particularly Jimmy Nichols and

David Anthony, because they demonstrated outstanding journalistic integrity and courage which should be brought to the attention of this House.

Finally, I pay tribute to all of those people who, during the past five or six years, have fought courageously against issues that I can describe only as horrific. I hope that no member of this House will ever be subjected to the sorts of things that those people faced.

**Mr BEARD** (Mount Isa—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.30 p.m.): A historian once said, "God forbid that I should ever live in interesting times." We are certainly living in interesting times now. I do not think there has ever been a Parliament to equal this one, to which a number of us were elected at the end of 1986. I think it is a fair acceptance that a definition of good government is quiet government, unobtrusive government. Government that proceeds quietly, effectively and efficiently does its job. In the last two or three years in this State we have seen the Government lurching from crisis to crisis.

Years ago, when I travelled a lot in the course of my employment with my previous employer, I used to visit the southern States. It was very quaint for people to be introduced to someone from Queensland. The word would go around, "Here's a bloke from Queensland. Tell us about that Joh fellow." A person would become an instant celebrity, and it was quite embarrassing to become an instant celebrity in that respect because all people wanted to talk about was the deep north, the old curiosity State, and the quaint way in which things were done up here. For years and years we have lived with that.

The stage has been finally reached at which something was to be done about it. To sit here and listen to people talk about the tremendous courage and decisiveness with which one of the National Party Ministers instituted the Fitzgerald inquiry and brought this to fruition is a disastrous joke. A few years ago I saw a movie, the title of which was *Whoops Apocalypse*. It was about a guy who accidentally pressed the button and set off the atomic bomb. I think this is a case of a guy who, while his Premier was overseas, and who had a bit of rivalry with a young rival who might have been passing him in the race for the Premiership, decided he would do something startling and press the button. He had no idea of the size of the explosion that was to follow. In desperately following up and trying to gain control of it, he pressed all sorts of other buttons until, before he knew where he was, he had a full-blossomed inquiry in this State with very wide terms of reference, extensive resources allocated to it and almost unlimited time in which to carry out its investigations.

As far as this Government stuck with that and honoured its commitment to the Fitzgerald commission, even though I believe the whole thing started quite accidentally, I pay full tribute to the Government for that. The Government did carry it through. The Fitzgerald report was given to honourable members this week. Like many other people, as this came to fruition and as many of my friends and I waited for this report to be released, we looked forward with great excitement to what was to happen in this State. At last the Government was to clean up those jibes about being the laughing-stock politically in the southern States. I agree with Mr Katter, who gave some very good examples of other States having no right whatsoever to laugh at us. But we put up with it.

Today we are a little bit regretful that we have been given only 48 hours—or in the case of those of us from the bush, 24 hours, because I did not receive my copy until 11 o'clock yesterday morning—in which to read the report. That is a very short time in which to read it. I had to sit in the aircraft trying to read the report, in my room last night until 2 o'clock this morning trying to read it and then I got up early this morning trying to read it.

I then came to this Chamber full of hope that at last this State was to be brought out of a disastrous political era and that corruption, which is so deeply ingrained in the whole web and fabric of this State, was to be cleaned up. But what did we find? We

found that the Speaker of this House, quite correctly having received a letter from a member and quite correctly, as he explained, having decided that it was not up to him to make a political decision about whether it should be dealt with one way or another, said that it should be referred to the Privileges Committee. Within a couple of minutes of that the House was in complete turmoil and we have lurched away from one series of crises into another completely new crisis, which we are still discussing at 25 to 12 at night. I gather from the list of speakers who have indicated that they want to speak that this matter will probably be debated all night and maybe into tomorrow as well.

We had to listen to the Premier make an outrageous accusation of conspiracy. I will not spend a great deal of time talking about that, because I think it was effectively put to bed by other speakers and by Mr Powell himself when he spoke. I do not intend to speak for the ALP; it can speak for itself. But why the hell would the ALP, with five of its members not in the House to vote, come in with a conspiracy? That by itself puts the lie to it. The whole thing is laughable. I should not say that it is laughable; it is too damned serious to be laughable.

Tonight the Premier appeared on TV talking about the Labor Party and the Liberal Party joining in a conspiracy with the Speaker of the House. For what reason, God only knows. It is complete tripe. I might add that also appearing on the television tonight was the secretary of the National Party branch in the Premier's own electorate of Landsborough. He said that the Premier was a disaster. That is what is happening within the National Party. Earlier someone said that the National Party does not seem to realise that it is in turmoil today; that it is in a period of very great crisis. Let me say that it is.

Individually I do not bear any ill-will to any of the National Party members or Labor Party members. I believe that everyone in this House is according to his or her own lights trying to do something not only for his or her own electorate but also for the people of the State of Queensland and for the wealth of Queensland. All of us come into this place with the best of intentions to do that. Where we differ is in the means by which we believe we can achieve these things. Individually, they are good people. I talk to them, I write to them, I ask them for favours. I write to Ministers and I am dealt with courteously and promptly. I have no complaints individually with any of them. However, they get together in this House and some sort of group stupidity seems to overtake them. Why on earth did they stop that vote this morning when it was such an easy matter to let the thing go to the Privileges Committee? Out of nine committee members, five are Government members. Why the hell are we standing here tonight—probably all night—debating this when the Government could have just let it go through and we could be eight hours into discussing this seminal book, which deals with the whole future of this State? It is critical to the State of Queensland. The eyes of the whole of Australia are on us. As members of this House we have had to suffer the embarrassment, with full galleries all day and schoolchildren coming in and out watching us behaving like clowns in the pit. We do not even have a Speaker. We cannot get on with debating this report, which has cost \$22m and has taken two years to prepare. We are arguing, with the whole of Australia looking on, with the media taking over completely and wondering what the hell goes on in this Parliament of Queensland, and all for nothing.

Why did the members of the National Party not let the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee and let us get on with the business that we have come to Parliament to transact? The worst part about it is that National Party members show pretences to righteousness. It is really the sanctimoniousness of so many of them that irritates not only me but also everybody else in this State. They profess to be Christians. Let me suggest that what many of them are on about is not Christianity but religiosity. They make a virtue of parading supposed virtues but they really do not understand compassion, correctness or what causes corruption in this State. They go on parading these virtues and do the most stupid things which force members of Parliament into this type of debate.

We in the Liberal Party have to sit in this Chamber and listen to clowns on the Government side of the House calling us socialists.

**Mr Yewdale:** Which particular clowns are you talking about?

**Mr BEARD:** Pick one. It is the continual yapping that comes from the Government side whenever we in the Liberal Party stick to our principles of free enterprise. We have to put up with clowns on the Government side calling out that we are socialists. They keep talking about our voting with the Labor Party. Let me tell you, Mr Deputy Clerk, and everybody else who is listening, that for 99 per cent of the time since I have been a member of this Parliament, the Liberal Party has voted with the Labor Party on procedural matters. They were occasions upon which Government members tried to apply the gag or do something else to stifle free discussion. Every time the National Party does that, the Liberal Party will vote with anyone who opposes that type of action. That is why we vote with the Labor Party.

On the truly substantive issues of free enterprise—which we as a conservative party believe in and which the National Party as a nominal conservative party is supposed to believe in—we have stood alone while National Party members voted with the Labor Party on nationalising gas pipelines, setting up the Queensland Treasury Corporation, establishing the Rental Bond Board, introducing the mobile homes legislation and taking a 25 per cent share of the Greenvale nickel refinery. They do not know anything about free-enterprise government. They are the ones who vote with the Labor Party on those truly substantive issues. We will always vote with any party which supports free and open debate and resists the gag or the guillotine being applied.

**Mr Milliner:** What are you saying—that we are the goodies?

**Mr BEARD:** Sometimes I really wonder.

Superficially, it may appear to people in this Chamber that we are talking about electing a new Speaker, and I guess we are. However, what we are really talking about is the leadership of the National Party, but there is no leadership; National Party members have lost it.

I was fortunate enough to spend 20 years working in private enterprise for an organisation that prided itself on its good and effective management and on getting things done. It aimed at agreeing on objectives and measuring performance against those objectives. It believed in getting behind a leader with a good team and getting things done. I have come from that and have seen what has happened on the Government side over the last two and a half years. I look over there and remember that less than two years ago people were pulling on “Joh for PM” T-shirts. It is disappointing to realise that half of the National Party representatives were voted into this Parliament without one picture of them being circulated in the electorate. The pictures were of Joh Bjelke-Petersen with the slogan, “Vote for Joh”.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Mr BEARD:** I respond to that by pointing out that a short while ago Mr Katter spoke about villainy afoot in a Liberal Government in Victoria under Hamer and in a Liberal Government in New South Wales under Askin. I deplore their behaviour. I do not rise in this Chamber and take any responsibility for what they did. I deplore their behaviour in the same way as I deplore the corruption that is endemic in this State and revealed line by line in this document. Every page of the Fitzgerald report condemns members of the National Party Government and many others as well. I condemn corrupt behaviour wherever it originates.

**Mr Mackenroth:** What do you think of the performance of those who did nothing about it?

**Mr BEARD:** I can tell you that I grew up in this State prior to 1957. By 1957 when there was a Labor Government in this State, I was already 22 years old. As a boy, I saw the senior sergeant in charge of police at Mount Isa getting free meals every day at one of the local hotels. When I was a teenager or young adult, I had been into an SP shop and I know that those shops took turns in being raided. They used to say, “It’s

your turn this week, Bill, and your turn next week. The sergeant wants it this way." The pay-offs were going to coppers way back then. I have seen all that type of corruption. I have seen the two-up game in mining towns such as Mount Isa that the police closed their eyes to.

**Mr Mackenroth:** What do you think about the performance of those who did nothing about it?

**Mr BEARD:** What I am getting at, if the member for Chatsworth will listen, is this: corruption of an individual starts with a tiny little bite. The first time he takes \$10 and the first time he accepts a free meal, that is when the villains know they have him. I am trying to tell the honourable member that although I am in my fifties now, when I was growing up it seemed to be perfectly normal to see that SP shops were operating, that there were two-up games, and that coppers did have free meals. A senior sergeant of a CI Branch boasted to me in the 1950s that I was a mug because I was not in on it. Every Saturday, he had £10 on the winner of the last race in Sydney. The bookies at the racecourse took turns in giving it to him. Whatever odds came up, he had them.

I am trying to demonstrate how endemic corruption is. To my knowledge, this has been going on in Queensland since the forties and fifties, which was when a Labor Government was in office. Do not get me wrong: I am not trying to say that it is all the fault of Labor. It was picked up and taken over by a coalition Government led by the National Party. What made the Labor fellows lucky before 1957 is what is referred to in the Fitzgerald report. He said that in those days when fellows were on the take, the spoils simply were not as great. Queensland was not an affluent State and the big money was not available. It was only when the National Party came to Government that the big money started to circulate and people started to get the big stuff.

**Mr Mackenroth:** What do you think about the performance of those who did nothing about it?

**Mr BEARD:** All right, it was a coalition. What are we going to talk about, Mr Mackenroth? Are we here to reverse the past and go over it all again, bit by bit? I say that we need the past only insofar as it sets up the scenario that presents itself today. Your job and my job is to get this nonsense over with, get a Speaker back in the chair, and get the Parliament working again to deal with tomorrow and the future. I am not saying that my party was not quite as bad as yours. I am not saying that mine is bigger than yours, but yours is bigger than his, or anything else. Our job is dealing with tomorrow and getting on with the future. We cannot do that because of the nonsense that took place in this Parliament today.

**Mr Hinton:** You are running away from your responsibilities.

**Mr BEARD:** Mr Hinton, I have no personal involvement at all, in any shape or form, with corruption—in common with you, I hope. I will speak completely freely about what has been revealed in this report. I want to play my part. Indeed, my electorate demands that I play my part in getting this problem fixed up. That is why I am here. The past is important only insofar as it shows us what has happened and how it happened; not to engage in arguments about whether your villain was bigger than my villain or anything else.

**Mr Elliott:** Why are you saying it's all our fault?

**Mr BEARD:** I am not. What occurred this morning is the fault of the members of the National Party. Instead of this House getting on with the debate on the Fitzgerald report, we are mucking around without a Speaker. You people behave so predictably——

**Mr Hinton:** But you knew it was going to happen.

**Mr BEARD:** We did not. That is a downright, scurrilous lie.

As soon as Government members are put under pressure they kick out, kick heads. They back into corners like wild animals and scratch, fight and argue. They do not understand what rational argument and rebuttal is all about. This morning—and he was quoted again this afternoon—Mr Austin said, “It’s the numbers, mate, and that is why we are here.” The other night a man from Launceston was interviewed on the television and the interviewer asked him, “Would you kick a man when he was down?” He replied, “Only if he tries to get up.” I thought it was Mr Austin and had to look again. It was not him, but it sounded just like him.

This debate is all about whether honourable members will vote for Mr Kevin Lingard or Mr Lin Powell as Speaker of this House. The debate on the election of the Speaker happened 18 months ago, and it was rehearsed earlier today, but I will refer to it again because National Party members are deliberately misunderstanding what was said. They have quoted Angus Innes and some members of the Labor Party as stating that Mr Powell was not a good man to be Speaker. At that time we were judging him on his performance as Education Minister and were entitled to express that opinion. At one time, when Mr Powell was pushing some education legislation through this House and had asked us to give him trust and goodwill, I remember saying, “If ever they hang him for generating trust and goodwill, they will be hanging an innocent man.” At that time an education Bill was passing through the House. As far as his performance as Speaker is concerned, I fall into line with the speakers who today have complimented him on giving an absolutely first-class performance as Speaker of this House. That has nothing to do with the fact that 18 months ago when Mr Powell was nominated for the position of Speaker, the Liberal Party expressed reservations about whether or not he would be a good Speaker.

Unlike Mr De Lacy, I thought that Mr Lingard was a good Speaker, and I said so. If Mr Lingard is elected to the position of Speaker at the end of this debate, I will live with Mr Lingard as Speaker. Tonight this House is arguing about a principle, that is, that the members of the National Party—without understanding one wit of what they were doing—moved a vote of no confidence in the Speaker of this House and drove him from that chair.

**Mr Hobbs:** That’s rubbish.

**Mr BEARD:** Mr Hobbs is still proving that Government members do not know what they are doing. Christ said from the cross, “Forgive them, Lord, they know not what they do.” This is the tragedy of the matter. These are men of goodwill who are trying to do something for the good of their electorates and the State. They are good people and I like them, but today they have driven the Speaker from the chair, instead of getting on to debate the single most important thing that has happened in this State during this century. This House is now dealing with a matter that should never have arisen.

I fear that the National Party Government is putting the implementation of the Fitzgerald report at risk. The stakes are enormous. A while ago Mr Katter said that I was getting aggressive and at the time I did not bother answering him. The reason why I was becoming aggressive was because the honourable member for Aspley listed all the reports into corruption in other States which have never been implemented, and I was simply calling out to get her opinion of the Sturgess, Lucas and O’Connell reports in Queensland. She would not answer because she was trying to shift the focus from this State onto other States by pointing out what they have not done, just as Mr Ahern said, “Don’t ask me what’s happening here; look at what a good boy I am compared to all the other States.” The members of the National Party Government operate under the delusion that two wrongs make a right or, if they do it, then it is okay because others do it, too.

The root of most of the evil in this State comes as a result of young policemen being seduced with that first little bribe, that first free meal, that first 10 bucks, that first free bet on the races and that first Christmas present from a prostitute in a brothel. The way they justify it is to say, “Well, why not? Everyone else is doing it. If I don’t do it,

somebody else will. If there is \$100 to be given away, why shouldn't my wife and kids have it? Why should someone else's wife and kids have it?" The frightening thing is that if I was a young copper today in the Queensland police force where morale is so low, I honestly do not know how I would react. I sincerely fear that I would be sucked in in the same way because that is the prevailing culture, and it goes back generations. For example, a Christmas party is being held. The sergeant in charge of the station says to a young constable, "We are having a few beers. Are you having some?" He replies, "Of course I am, sergeant." After having a few beers the sergeant says, "Look, we are just going down the road. The girls down the road have got a few beers on and there is something to eat. Are you coming?" The young constable replies, "Of course I am." The young constable is not paying for it, he gets down there and finds out what kind of a house he is in. Other offers are made. Can any honourable member point out to me a young 21-year old man who, when amongst heaps of people who are in it up to their necks, says, "Hey, I am getting out of this. This is not for me."? If honourable members find such a man, they have found a saint.

This is the reason why I have the most tremendous sympathy for many members of the Queensland police force who have been dragged into this corruption a little bit at a time from the time when they first joined the force. I have great sympathy for them, but I do not have sympathy for the Jack Herberts of the world who organised it into a system. They are the drug-sellers. The helpless drug-users who get hooked when they are kids are one problem, but the mongrels who deal in drugs and reap off the profits by seducing others into taking drugs are different altogether.

Does our Premier, Mr Ahern, realise what he and his party have done today? He started this morning under a cloud. The cloud is that he has misled this Parliament. Whether or not he has is for someone else to decide. It could have been decided by the Privileges Committee, in which his party has the power, but he and his party elected for the matter not to go there. So there is an unresolved cloud hanging over the Premier's head. In the Fitzgerald report reference is made to a well-known policeman who was mentioned again and again and again during the inquiry—Tony Murphy. There was the death of a prostitute, Shirley Brifman, who was to be the leading witness against him in 1971. She died rather mysteriously from a drug overdose before the trial commenced. In his report Mr Fitzgerald makes very clear the point that Murphy was never tried and acquitted of that charge; it was just never resolved. The Premier has not been tried and acquitted of his charge. It has not been resolved and he has that hanging over his head. It will continue to hang over his head until such time as he has the guts and members of the Government have the intelligence to let the Speaker of this House put that matter where it belongs, which is with the Privileges Committee.

**Mr Muntz:** That is garbage.

**Mr BEARD:** It is not garbage at all. The Premier of this State is living under an accusation that he misled the House. I ask the Minister to tell me something worse that could be said about a Premier. That matter has not been resolved.

**Mr Ardill:** They don't understand it.

**Mr BEARD:** That is it, exactly. They do not understand it.

The most dangerous thing that could happen is that the Fitzgerald report will not be given the attention it deserves. At midnight we have people sitting in the gallery listening to this debate, half of which is garbage, which should not be on. This debate is not necessary. To the bottom of my soul I fear that the Fitzgerald report will become boring to the people of Queensland. In my own electorate, when the report was released people had such high hopes and expectations. Many of them were on the wrong tram. Many expected that, when Mr Fitzgerald produced his report, a few blokes would be hung, a couple would be shot at dawn and some others would be taken away for ever and ever, amen. That was not Mr Fitzgerald's mandate and, thanks be to God, he knew that.

What Mr Fitzgerald is attacking in this report is what he is hoping that we will have the guts and the nous to remedy in this House. He is attacking the very systems, the very structures, that have allowed this corruption to flourish. Mr Drummond, QC, has the job of seeking out the individual wrong-doers and prosecuting them to the full extent of the law. The people of Queensland, who quite justifiably demand that they be brought to justice, will have to wait until it is done by correct process. It cannot be hurried; it must be done properly according to correct process.

So already the people of Queensland are saying, "Oh hell, this is boring. This is talking about structures and systems. When are they going to hang a few of those villains?" As members of this place, it is our job to point out to them, as I did to my people, that that was not his mandate. The most serious thing in this State is not shooting some fellow because he is a villain—let us get him, for sure—but to fix this State up, to correct the structures and to bring in new systems so that this can never happen again. That is what we are about. That is why we are here. But we are not doing it today. We are talking a lot of muck because the silly fellows and women on the Government side allowed this nonsense to go on this afternoon.

**Mr Muntz:** Let us get on with it.

**Mr BEARD:** This motion would not be under debate if Government members had taken a different course this afternoon.

What will happen while this debate is going on is that the Fitzgerald report will slip out of the headlines. It will go to item two, three or four on the television news and off the front page of the newspapers. In a couple of weeks it will be lucky to get a paragraph in the *Courier-Mail* and eventually someone will say, "Whatever happened with the Fitzgerald report?" It will be up on the shelf with the other three—the Sturgess, Lucas and O'Connell reports. It is our job to keep this alive and ensure that the people of Queensland do not get bored by it.

Regardless of whether the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report are implemented, if the report is not dealt with properly by this place and if we do not decide what to do about it, we can not only forget Queensland but we can also forget Australia for the next 50 years because the villains will have a field day. No-one else will ever be able to establish another commission like this because no-one will come forward to chair it. Nobody will want to work on it. People will quite correctly say, "What is the point? What is the use? What will happen if we do issue a report? What will happen if we spend \$24m and two years of our time? It will be presented to Parliament and it will be put on a shelf. It will slip off the front pages and it will be business as usual." That will mean that all of those villains—including some of the National Party's leading politicians, including some cronies of the Government who took advantage of and favours from the Government when it was in power, and including people at the very top of the police force, who were supposed to be responsible for law and order in this State—will be back in business. Jack Herbert will be heard laughing and a lot of good, honest, decent people who live in Queensland will pack up their bags and go to live somewhere else.

Long before I ever became interested enough in politics to put my name down to enter Parliament, I can remember back in the 1970s when Sir Joh really started his nonsense by not investigating the incident when a girl involved in a street march was hit over the head with a police baton and by pushing other things under the carpet. At one stage Sir Joh said, "If we don't get our way, we'll secede." A friend of mine said, "If we secede, I'm going back to Australia." I said, "Amen, brother, so am I."

We have got over that. Sir Joh has gone, thank the Lord. I thought we were getting somewhere. Everything looked so great. Mr Deputy Clerk, do you and those on the Government benches realise the high hopes with which all of us came to Brisbane this week? Coming down on the plane the other night I sat proudly with this report on my lap. I was like a kid with a new toy and hoped that somebody would say, "What is the book?" I intended to say, "It is the Fitzgerald report. Aren't I clever reading it?" I felt

good about it. I felt great. I felt that at last, after all these years, we were going to get something done.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Did anyone ask you?

**Mr BEARD:** No, no-one asked me. The hostess ignored me. It was the story of my life: the hostess gave everyone else a drink before I got one.

We get down here but we do not debate it. The gallery was full of Queensland people who came here to see an historic day. They got an historic day, all right, but here we are at midnight still debating the election of a Speaker.

I was given to understand that Leisha Harvey received a phone call in Lithuania or Switzerland or somewhere and that they have tracked down Leo Gately in a nightclub somewhere in the United States or Canada and they are hurriedly getting on planes to fly back to Brisbane. When Mr Katter got up to speak, I thought that those rumours were right because he would take up a couple of hours, which would give them time to get back.

At some time shortly we will have to vote on who will be the Speaker of this House to see us through to the election. In my opinion, Mr Lingard is a good man for whom I have great respect. Regardless of what other people say, I have no objection personally with him as the Speaker of this House. However, I submit that that is not the point. The point is that this morning the Government disgracefully expressed no confidence in the Speaker—a Speaker who has won the respect of every member of the three parties. The Government has driven him from the chair and forced us into a debate about who should be the next Speaker of the House, instead of examining the most critical report which has ever been presented to any Parliament in Australia.

Instead of shouting, interrupting, yapping and calling us socialists, which is absolute tripe, and talking about a non-existent conspiracy, which makes a joke of the Government in the public's eyes, members on the Government benches should be urged to think about what they have done. I ask Government members, for God's sake, to think about what they are doing and to put Lin Powell back in the chair.

**Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (12.02 a.m.):** It was difficult to sit here tonight and listen to the Minister for Community Services and Ethnic Affairs try to dredge up stories of so-called corruption in the other States of Australia and try to isolate the incidents that involved Labor Governments. After all, Mr Katter is the Minister who signed the cheque for \$10,000 to Mr Lui in the Torres Strait for an ex gratia payment for services rendered. He arranged the infamous land swap to favour Margaret Srebniak in Townsville—a pure and devoted National Party supporter.

Another point is that Mr Katter is one of the Ministers who used tax-payers' funds to implement stopper writs against members of the Opposition. Yet tonight he has the hide to accuse the Opposition of not doing its job. Years ago, Mr Ahern used this place to attack Kevin Hooper over the accusations that he made about prostitution, illegal gambling and so on that he said was occurring in this city, which has proven to be so correct.

However, the point that people are missing and which needs to be clearly understood is that the other States have taken action on these matters. Mrs Nelson gave some examples. She talked about 30 royal commissions that have been conducted around Australia, which seems to cut across the statement made by the Premier that none of the other States are doing those things. It appears from Mrs Nelson's comments tonight that some 30 royal commissions have been held in the other States of Australia into the very things that we are talking about this evening. However, the big difference is that in those other States the system is in place to ensure that the guilty are found and punished. If they are members of the criminal element of the community, they appear before the courts. If they are Governments, they get voted out of office. In Victoria, the Hamer Government got tossed out of office. In New South Wales, the Labor Government got tossed out of office. In New South Wales, a Labor Minister ended up in gaol. Those

things occurred because the systems are in place to ensure that they do occur. However, in Queensland, the corruption that we have learned about through the Fitzgerald inquiry has benefited by the very system that we are being asked to review as an important part of this Fitzgerald report.

I make the point that the Fitzgerald inquiry report is a magnificent document. I take up the point made by my colleague the member for Cairns, who doubts that Government members clearly understand the import of what is in that document. That is very true. If they understood the recommendations that have been made, they would appreciate that what Mr Fitzgerald is recommending will turn Government administration in this State on its ear and introduce a degree of accountability that we have never had previously in Queensland.

I refer particularly to electoral reform, which has already had a considerable airing and which, no doubt, we will hear more about. This evening on the media, we heard that interference in electoral matters is still going on. The member for Mount Isa referred to claims by Mr Santo Ferarro, the secretary of the Caloundra branch of the National Party, of which Mr Ahern is a member. So, too, are his wife, Andrea, and his father, Mr John Ahern. Tonight, Mr Ferarro accused the Ahern family of attempting to manipulate the pre-selection process for the Federal seat of Fairfax. It appears that Mrs Andrea Ahern has been installed as the local delegate to the electoral council meeting to select a National Party candidate replacement for the retiring member, Mr Evan Aderman.

Tonight on television, Mr Ferarro said about the workings of the Caloundra branch—

“It is becoming an Ahern family affair up here.

They look after their own interests in terms of their political aspirations.”

It emerges that a member of the Caloundra branch to be the delegate to the pre-selection meeting was found to be non-financial and, without any meeting being held, was replaced by Andrea Ahern. There is, however, now to be an executive meeting of the branch to formally select a delegate.

It is supreme irony that news of such heavy-handed interference in this internal National Party electoral process should emerge today, the day on which Mr Ahern has imposed a six-week freeze on action to set the ball rolling to revise Queensland's electoral laws as the Fitzgerald report recommends.

The second important matter that Mr Fitzgerald recommended is the protection for persons making public statements about misconduct or inefficiencies in the public service. How often have members of Parliament been told by public officials that they cannot talk to them; that they have instructions from Ministers that they are not to talk to politicians? I can assure Government members that, if they have trouble talking to public servants, members of the Opposition have even greater difficulty in getting information out of Government departments, because the officers have been told that they are not to talk to politicians, particularly Opposition politicians. They certainly do not talk to the media, under threat of dismissal. That is the sort of thing that Mr Fitzgerald is recommending should be abolished. People who detect corruption or cronyism in their areas of responsibility ought to be allowed to talk about it.

The recommendation regarding guide-lines for ministerial involvement in appointments, of course, is aimed at ending the scuttle-butt, the rumours and the involvement of Ministers in the appointments of public officials. The report recommends the audit of all ministerial expenditure—which everyone realises is well and truly overdue—and the introduction of a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees, which is something very few of us have had any experience of.

It is certainly the aim of my colleagues and myself, as elected representatives of our electorates, to take part in the good government of Queensland. We want to be a part of ministerial and parliamentary committees in an effort to ensure that the expertise that we believe we have and the representation that we can bring from our particular areas is put to good use. As far as I am aware, parliamentary committees have not been used in this State for decades.

I turn to the provision of information to non-Government members. The lack of information from Government departments is alarming. It certainly annoys me that I am not consulted on the location of schools in my electorate, roadworks that might be planned by the Main Roads Department and so on. None of that sort of information comes to me, although I am the elected State representative for my area. It is certainly irksome to me to have representatives of lobby groups telephone me and tell me of some decision that the Government has made when I am the elected member for the area. Obviously, the Government communicates with those groups but fails to keep non-Government members informed.

The report talks about a review of the laws relating to public assembly——

**Mr Katter:** We always tell you about Aboriginal houses.

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** I acknowledge that the Minister for Community Services does do that. His is the only department that does contact me in advance and advise me of decisions that he has made in regard to the purchase of property and ask for my comment.

I have also made a note of the recommendation regarding a review of the constitution and powers of tribunals, boards and courts. All honourable members would accept that that is well and truly overdue. The Opposition has argued for many, many years that the Government has politically manipulated the membership of hospital boards, harbour boards and so on.

Honourable members will recall that I have had a long-running dispute with the Townsville Hospitals Board in regard to past practices of Ward 10B. The most recent and incredible example of the way in which that organisation operates is that on 15 May a meeting was held between the hospitals board and the Ward 10B Victims Action Group, of which I am the convenor. A clear undertaking was given prior to that meeting that all of the proceedings of that meeting would be recorded and the transcripts provided to the board members, of course, and also to the members of our group. Because of embarrassing statements that were made at that meeting, the transcripts are now not to be made available. I find that an extraordinary decision, coming from a board that is meant to represent the community. That is, of course, the only real purpose of hospitals boards.

In many ways, hospitals boards are an anachronism. They were originally established to raise money for the running of hospitals, but their purpose these days is supposedly to represent the general community on the hospital administration. They are clearly not doing that when they are prepared to withhold this vital information from us.

I just cited some of those examples to indicate what I believe is the value of this report and to repeat again that the implementation of the recommendations in the report will certainly turn public accountability in this State on its ear and we can start to think in terms of the sort of State that we would all like Queensland to be.

Unfortunately, the very first time those recommendations and that degree of accountability of which I have spoken were put to the test occurred in this Chamber today. I think that whenever this parliamentary sitting day concludes—whatever time that might be—history will record that it has been yet another very sad day in the history of Queensland and particularly in the history of this Parliament. We did miss the opportunity to take up one of the very important points made by Tony Fitzgerald, and that is the importance of parliamentary debate, the importance of an independent Speaker in the Parliament, and the importance of generally improving the way in which this Parliament operates.

Without going over the background to it—it has already been aired very clearly—the fact is that, for reasons known only to itself, the Government chose on this occasion not to support the Speaker. For as long as I have been a member of this Parliament, the rulings of the Speaker have been virtually sacrosanct. It is understood by all honourable members, I am sure, that it is their responsibility to pay due respect to the Chair. Yet

today, on a matter that I think with the coolness of hindsight most people would realise should go before the Privileges Committee for consideration, the Government chose not to back the Speaker. That was clearly done to avoid embarrassment.

Somebody on the Government side or some group of people on the Government side dreamt up this incredible story of some sort of conspiracy involving the parties on this side of the House and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Edward Lyons. Clearly, the proposition is laughable. Those honourable members who take note of what is going on in this place would surely find it incredible that Edmund Casey, Tom Burns, Nev Warburton and a number of other members of the Opposition would enter into a conspiracy with Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Could honourable members imagine Nev Warburton sitting down and discussing a conspiracy with Joh Bjelke-Petersen? I find the whole thing so laughable that it is hardly worth mentioning.

The other thing that I find incredible is the way in which various speakers on the Government side, in their speeches and also by way of interjection, poured scorn on Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I find that amazing. It was only 18 months or two years ago that they would have all been licking his feet because, as somebody else said, most members of the Government only came into this place because of the support that he gave them. One of the most humiliating things in political life in Queensland is that well-known television shot of Tommy Hynd, Bill Gunn and Brian Austin, I think, appearing in their "Joh for PM" T-shirts and all laughing and smiling and patting Joh on the back and saying what a great bloke he was. Yet tonight they are condemning him and saying that this whole error of judgment today by the Government in failing to support the Speaker was somehow dreamt up by this horrible person, Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

The other person who the Government tried to blame, of course, is Sir Edward Lyons. Again, there would be very few members on the Government side who have not benefited over the years from the fund-raising that Sir Edward Lyons did for the National Party. I have seen in the newspapers recently a proposal that the money that is still left in the Bjelke-Petersen Foundation will be used to fund the Young Nationals in Queensland. So, on the one hand, the members of the Government have all benefited from the generosity of that fellow, yet on the other hand, today they are criticising him and using him and Joh as a way of hiding their embarrassment.

The member for Lockyer seemed to be trying to get away from the conspiracy theory and at least set out for honourable members the set of circumstances that occurred as he recalled them. They seemed to confirm the version provided to us by the former Speaker. So we come to the situation in which, for reasons of principle, the member for Isis has resigned from the position of Speaker. This evening we have to make a choice as to whether we re-elect that gentleman to the position or bring in a nominee of the National Party, Mr Lingard.

As an aside, I understand that the other candidate in the party room, who was defeated, was Mr Burreket from Townsville, which is somewhat surprising. I do not know what the votes were, but I guess we can be content that at least the candidate that the Government is putting up is a considerable improvement on the member for Townsville.

I did not want to get into the business of criticising Mr Lingard personally, but when one thinks about it: what a pathetic man he is. When the crunch came——

**Honourable members interjected.**

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** Now I will get serious. Just remember when the crunch came to get rid of Joh and all of these jobs were being thrown around. Joh sacked five Ministers or something like that. It was Kev Lingard who went to Joh and said, "Please, sir, let it be me. Let me have one of these ministerial jobs." He is famous now, along with Mr Simpson, as being one of the shortest-serving Ministers in the history of the State. Now that the members of the National Party with blood on their hands are seeking to fill another position, it is Kev Lingard again who is saying, "Please, sir, let it be me."

One wonders how on earth the members of the party that formed the Government in this day and age live with their consciences.

In fairness to the members of the Liberal Party—I guess that members of the Labor Party should be the last people to be singing their praises—in their favour they are in a similar position to that of members of the Labor Party. The members of our political party are driven by a philosophy that dictates the way that we operate on most occasions. We know that on most matters that come before this place there is a uniformity within the Labor Party. I guess it is the same within the Liberal Party. Because above all else we are parliamentarians, the way in which we voted today was very obvious. An obvious position had been reached by us that we would support the recommendation of the Speaker in this matter. However, in the National Party at the moment it is very clear that its members are running off in all sorts of different directions. The Premier is throwing stones and extending olive branches here and there. He is flying all over the place to try to establish a position of popularity. Unfortunately for the National Party, that has been shown as an illustration of weakness. It must be disappointing to some of the genuine people in the National Party—the old Country Party types—to find this happening. When one talks about people such as Tony Burreket, the member for Townsville, one will be aware that he only joined the National Party three days before nominations closed for the 1986 election, so he has no philosophical base. Mick Veivers, the member for Southport, would not have any real philosophical links with the National Party.

**Mr Scott:** What about Mr Tenni, a financial member of the Labor Party?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** Mrs Nelson is another one. Mr Tenni has been mentioned. Those are people who really only joined the National Party in a desire to achieve power. The way in which our State is administered, the way in which the electoral boundaries have been——

**Mr Stephan:** Did you realise that Mr Veivers had a dairy farm?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** I realise that, but I am talking about his attitude to life and his concerns for the people. It would seem to me to indicate that he has no close links with the National Party. The people who are running in the National Party these days are only in there out of a sense of power. That is why they will find it very, very difficult indeed to absorb the sorts of recommendations that Mr Fitzgerald has made. That is why they found it difficult today to accept the obvious way in which this Parliament should have supported the Speaker in the decision that he took in regard to this matter.

Probably one of the most telling speeches in this Chamber today was made by Sir William Knox. Despite the disagreements we may have with him on matters of policy, I think everyone in the Chamber would recognise him as a very experienced parliamentarian and a man who strongly believes in the ethics and the traditions of this place. I think he offered very sound advice to all honourable members today. The final comment that he made was that, when we do vote in the ballot that will be conducted some time in the next few hours, we ought to think as parliamentarians, not necessarily as politicians. This is a decision for parliamentarians. It is the first occasion on which we have the opportunity to put in place the level of accountability and the level of good, sound and honest Government that Mr Fitzgerald has talked about. So far we have failed the test. I say “we” because the decision of the Parliament was to reject the recommendation of the Speaker. Opposition members can rest with their consciences because we voted the way, I think, that the people of Queensland would have expected us to vote. On the other hand, Government members failed to support the Speaker.

The member for Lockyer made what I would call a very contradictory statement when he said that the Speaker had a responsibility to support always the position of the Government. I find that an incredible statement. It is one that will come back to haunt the Government. Having made that statement, the honourable member obviously rejects the counter-argument that the Government of the day ought to support the Speaker. If

one is true, then certainly the reverse ought to be true. On this occasion the Government chose not to make that true.

I think that the member for Lockyer tried to get away from the conspiracy theory. I guess that he should be given some credit for that. However, he failed to convince any of us, for the reasons he gave, as to how the whole debacle occurred. The point was that irrespective of how many called "yes" and how many called "no" and so on, when the vote came, the Government members chose not to support the Speaker. I think that they will have to live with that for the rest of their political lives, which I do not believe will be very long. On the other hand, those opposition members who have strong political philosophies, whether we be in the Labor Party or in the Liberal Party, voted as parliamentarians. I think that we will do that again in the ballot for Speaker.

**Mr CASEY (Mackay) (12.22 a.m.):** I want to talk about the election of a new Speaker, because that is really what this debate is all about. I do not want to talk about the Fitzgerald report and its recommendations, mainly because I am in a similar position to that of the honourable member for Mount Isa. I am still reading the report. Because I am a country member, I did not see the report until yesterday, and since then I have been pretty busy.

Because of what happened in this Parliament today and the situation in which honourable members found themselves, we are meeting under what must be regarded as unprecedented circumstances in the Queensland Parliament and probably in any other Parliament of Australia.

The day started with what should have been a fairly formal motion similar to many motions that have been moved on a number of occasions when matters have been referred to the Privileges Committee. As honourable members discovered this afternoon, the advice of the Speaker was given to the House after consideration and consultation. It was not given on the spur of the moment. The Speaker personally discussed the matter that had been referred to him by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with some of the Speakers from other Australian Parliaments.

In this Parliament and in other Parliaments that operate under the Westminster system not only in Australia but also overseas where there is stable Government, the Speaker makes a recommendation to the House and the House follows that recommendation. On this occasion the Government had a choice. It could simply have adopted the recommendation and buried it in the Privileges Committee. How often has a matter from this Parliament been referred to some form of committee and either forgotten, returned to this Parliament in an innocuous report or, as has already been indicated, submitted to the Parliament by that committee for some further form of debate?

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr CASEY:** I have just mentioned that. A report can come back for further debate in this Parliament. Unless the Government gags such a debate, every member has a right to state his opinion. However, that did not happen today. This Government has chosen to go against Powell the defector, if I might use that term.

**Mr Katter:** Oh!

**Mr CASEY:** The Minister for Community Services says, "Oh!" That is exactly what happened.

The Government chose to call for a division. It chose not to hand the matter over to the Privileges Committee, where it would be buried or a recommendation made. This Parliament and the people of Queensland must consider how that reflects on the judgment of the Premier of this State. The Premier has thrown this House and this State into turmoil. Because the Premier chose to take a stand on this issue against a man of principle—Lin Powell, the former Speaker of this Parliament—he has upset the parliamentary system that has been operating for generation after generation.

Honourable members are aware of why the Premier did that. They know that, in recent weeks, Mr Powell resigned from the party that is the Government of this State. Mr Powell has had his disputes with that party. He took strongly to the public a principled stand against his own Government on an issue of drugs. Whether honourable members agree or disagree with his action is another matter. I personally would agree with him on the whole issue. Mr Powell took that stand. His party, which is led by Sir Robert Sparkes and not the Premier, took issue against his action and endeavoured to change it. The issue was taken to Mr Powell's electorate council. The National Party tried to stack up the numbers against him to get the issue tossed out. But what did members of the National Party find? They found that the people of the Isis electorate support Mr Powell's stand on that issue and they are supported by a public poll that was conducted throughout Queensland.

Consequently, Mr Powell had to resign from his own party so he could stand proud in his electorate. Because I have been in similar circumstances, I understand his position. Because I was shown to be correct, I have lived to fight and survive another day. I believe that the same will apply to Mr Powell. He won his case in his electorate. His own people showed him to be correct and acting properly. However, that was still not satisfactory to Sir Robert Sparkes, the guru of the National Party in this State. It was Powell who dared to stand against Sir Robert Sparkes.

There is no conspiracy on this side in this matter. The conspiracy obviously is clearly on the National Party side of the House. I can assure honourable members that there was on this side of the House no conspiracy as alleged by which the Labor Party, in conjunction with the Liberal Party, was shaking hands with Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. As the honourable member for Thuringowa said a few moments ago, fellows such as Edmund Casey would not be standing here; I can assure honourable members of that. I would not have anything to do with Bjelke-Petersen in any type of conspiracy. I do not care what Peter Beattie does or how many cow-pats he kicked in a paddock at Kingaroy.

**Mr Hinton** interjected.

**Mr CASEY:** I do not care how the member for Broadsound takes a stand against his own party, as he does when he is in his electorate, away from Brisbane and out of sight of Sir Robert Sparkes. I do not care what he does up there. I am simply saying that there is no way in the world that this bloke here who is talking now would be a party to any conspiracy with Bjelke-Petersen; that is for sure. If that were the case, I would also be resigning, as Mr Powell did today from the Speakership.

As the longest-serving Opposition member, I inform honourable members that I have served under seven Speakers but only two Premiers: Bjelke-Petersen and now Mr Ahern. The first of the Speakers was Sir David Nicholson, a very strict man yet a very fair man. In the chair he was also very much a Government man.

Then there was Bill Lonergan. If honourable members will pardon the expression, he was known affectionately as "Bugger 'em Bill". That was his attitude to many things. He was elected in a surprise result. I would like Government members, especially back-bench members, to take note of this. Mr Lonergan was elected with their support. Because they were standing on a principle, some of those members, who are still serving, voted for Bill Lonergan against the selection of the Government.

There is a principle in the ballot that is to be held this evening that many members have to consider before they cast their vote in the secrecy to which they are entitled. Mr Lonergan stood on a principle. What happened? On that occasion, Mr Ahern was up to his ear-holes in it, too. When Mr Lonergan was elected, Mr Ahern finished up as the new Government Whip. That is when he was given his first promotion, the first pat on the head from Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. That was the first pat on the head that he ever received.

It was a surprise election because there were enough principled people in the National Party—it was not from the Liberal Party that they came on that occasion, I can assure honourable members—who were prepared, when they cast their vote, to say that they wanted Parliament to have Parliament's selection as Speaker, not the National Party Government's selection as Speaker. That is the point I want to get across to National Party back-benchers this evening. Unfortunately, Mr Lonergan was not a very fair Speaker. Even the Labor Party members of the House regretted that they had ever elected him. Mr Lonergan did not hold the office of Speaker for a very long time.

Eventually, Mr Jim Houghton became Speaker, again in controversial times, particularly as they related to me. Mr Houghton was the Speaker who exiled me, as Leader of the Opposition, to offices on the other side of town and who gave me limited staff. Things became very difficult. In later times he tried to square off by providing me with better offices here at Parliament House. Jim Houghton was a fine man, but as Speaker he fulfilled the Government's wishes.

Then along came Selwyn Muller. He was and still is a personal friend of mine. He was a very honest man. He was so honest that, after he was elected and taken up to the Speaker's chair, he said, "Thank you, members, for electing me. I am here to serve the Government." That is exactly what he did. He was there to serve the Government. That is not the manner in which the Speaker should carry out his duty.

Then came John Warner. Poor old John was a disaster. He was a lovely fellow, but how many honourable members sat in this Chamber watching him in the Speaker's chair, thinking that at any old tick of the clock he would have a stroke because he could not really handle the job? That was John's problem. He was a nice bloke, but nonetheless he had real problems.

The next Speaker I served under was Kev Lingard, who is the Government's nominee. Mr Lingard tried. Initially when he became Speaker he certainly did try. But eventually he knuckled under to the desires and wishes of the then Premier of the day, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. Because he knuckled under to his wishes, when the big dispute occurred within the National Party and the Premier decided to sack people such as the present Premier, Mr Muntz and others, Mr Lingard was rewarded with promotion to the Ministry for a very short period. He did not last too long and he was not reappointed to the Ministry after the change of power.

Another big blow-up occurred within the National Party and Mr Powell was nominated for Speaker by his own party and he won the Speakership. As a member of Parliament, I had known Mr Powell for a long time. He was one of the very, very few Ministers who would display the courtesies that I, as a back-bench member, received from Ministers when I first came into this place 20 years ago. He was one of the very few Ministers who would advise members when he was coming into their electorate to carry out official duties. He was one of the very few Ministers who were prepared to set out clearly for members of Parliament, irrespective of their political affiliation, the information concerning their electorates that was required from his department.

Mr Powell took the chair as Speaker and he became a very fair and just Speaker. He also became very innovative. As one of only seven members of this Parliament, I have been fortunate to be a member of the Parliamentary Service Commission with Mr Powell as Chairman. I want to say that Mr Powell has made every effort possible to make the Parliamentary Service Commission work. Unfortunately, he and other members of the commission have been thwarted by the failure of the Government to give up its power and enable the Parliamentary Service Commission to do the work that it has been properly selected by this Parliament to do. The blame for that lies directly at the feet of this Government. Much more on that subject will be heard in the future.

I said earlier that I did not intend to refer to the Fitzgerald report, but the reference I make is merely that he and the community believe that the Parliament should work independently of Executive Government. Unfortunately, Mr Ahern and other members of the National Party do not want to let go. They do not want the commission to work

independently of Executive Government and that is why they wanted to remove Lin Powell from the Speakership. They took that opportunity today.

Any conspiracy referred to today was one notched up in the National Party Cabinet. Any deceit was the deceit perpetrated on back-bench members of the National Party who did not know what was going on. It is only the National Party back bench that can correct the situation in the secret ballot that will be held shortly.

One very serious accusation made during this debate that concerns me was one made by the former Speaker, Lin Powell. He referred to his belief that his phone in the parliamentary building was being tapped. It is only by virtue of the power of the Executive that such a thing could occur. If the telephones in this Parliament are insecure, which telephones anywhere in this State are secure? If the Speaker is concerned that his telephone may be tapped, then whose phone is secure and who is secure in what he can say?

**Mr White:** Nobody around here.

**Mr CASEY:** Certainly. At a time when this Parliament is expected by the people of Queensland and other people in Australia to be accountable, we must ask: accountable to whom? Who will investigate the matter that the former Speaker, Mr Powell, raised this evening? Do we ask the Minister for Police, who is part of the Executive Government and who would have power to undertake such an inquiry? Do we ask the Commissioner for Police? Unfortunately, we do not have one, and Queensland does not have a very good track record in relation to that matter. Do we ask the Minister for Justice, who also is part of the Executive? The only way in which that security can be obtained is by electing an independent Speaker, Mr Powell. I ask all members of Parliament to take note of the problem and the solution. It is the only way that this matter can be satisfactorily resolved.

I have known Kev Lingard for a long time. He is a fine fellow—a good bloke. Unfortunately, if he is re-elected this evening, he will be for ever tagged with the label that he was selected as the protector of the National Party Government of this State.

**Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (12.43 a.m.):** Firstly I wish to state that I take offence at the remarks made by the Premier that there was a conspiracy between the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the former Speaker, Mr Powell, and the former Premier, Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. Certainly, I have had no part in a conspiracy with Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen. If one were to rationally consider this matter, one would ask: why on earth would members of the Labor Party, who were getting the fairest treatment they ever had from a Speaker in this Parliament over approximately 30 years, or at least during the time that I have been a member, become part of a conspiracy to get rid of that Speaker and to conspire to bring about an event to force him to resign? That is an absurd suggestion. If one thinks in that manner, one does not think very rationally.

The last time Parliament sat, we tried a judge because he made an allegation of conspiracy. We sacked him. I believe that the Premier, Mr Ahern, stands condemned by the statements he has made to this Parliament. He should be tried in a similar manner for making absurd and stupid comments, and then he should be sacked. I believe he should be sacked by the people of Queensland.

As the Speaker of this Parliament, Mr Powell carried out his duties in a fair and honest manner. He did not give members of the Opposition everything that they wanted. He has thrown Opposition members out of Parliament. He has ordered Opposition members to resume their seats. He has also stopped members of the Labor Party from asking questions that he believed were too long. However, he has treated members on the other side of the Chamber in a similar manner.

I do not know if he has chucked out anyone from the other side of the House, but I believe that he has acted fairly. He has allowed this Parliament to operate in the way recommended by Mr Fitzgerald. On Monday, Mr Ahern said to the people of Queensland

that the National Party Government would implement all the recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry, that is, 100 per cent. If honourable members read the report there are many statements in it which clearly say that there needs to be a change in the way Parliament operates. We do not have to go back to the past.

Tonight, when honourable members are considering who should be elected to the position of Speaker, they are not considering the appointment of two people who have never held the position. Both men previously held the position of Speaker and can be judged on their past performance. I turn now to look at the record of Mr Kevin Lingard. In his address to the Parliament he stated that as Speaker he was determined to have strong control, strict discipline and impartiality. Honourable members certainly saw the strict discipline when, only one week after he was elected, he hopped up and told everyone how they had to dress. Honourable members were not permitted to wear sports coats, but were required to wear a particular sort of suit. That was his way of showing us discipline. The one thing that honourable members never saw was his impartiality. In his speech following his election to the position of Speaker he stated that he accepted the role that the opposition parties are required to play. He never showed the Opposition this impartiality or his acceptance of the role of the Opposition.

Seven days after Mr Lingard was elected to the office of Speaker, when the new Labor Party member for Bowen, Mr Smyth, was making his maiden speech, the Speaker called him to order, asked him to resume his seat and told him to temper some of his comments. The honourable member for Bowen had stated that a person was—

“... convincing the people that he should be allowed to crush the trade union movement. That maniac—and I am using the word advisedly—after crushing trade unions ...”

The then Speaker, Mr Lingard, jumped to his feet and told the member for Bowen that he had to temper his comments. Mr Smyth went on to say that he was speaking about none other than Adolf Hitler. The Speaker had not bothered to wait to find out what the honourable member was referring to, but immediately jumped to the conclusion that the honourable member was referring to his Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The Speaker immediately jumped in to protect Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, even to the extent of interrupting a member's maiden speech; an action that no-one else in this Parliament would take. One week after becoming the Speaker, Mr Lingard was prepared to take that action in an attempt to protect the Premier of the day.

Later on, whilst Mr Lingard was in the chair, as soon as Mr R. J. Gibbs had begun to ask a question of a Minister, the Speaker jumped in and said that he was not prepared to allow discussion on the matter as he believed that it had already been covered. The honourable member did not even ask the question. The Speaker did not know if it was a new matter or if it was a question that had been asked previously. The member simply gave a preamble to the question and the Speaker considered the matter to be finished.

Another fine example concerns a matter of privilege. The honourable member for Lytton, Mr Burns, rose on a point of privilege in this Parliament and said—

“I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday I asked a question of the Premier about a well-known crooked ex-policeman, Glen Patrick Hallahan.”

The Speaker said, “Order!”, even though he did not know what the point of privilege was. Mr Burns continued to attempt to put his point of privilege across, but the Speaker of the day, Mr Kevin Lingard, would not even listen to the point of privilege. He then named the honourable member for Lytton under Standing Order 124 and had him evicted from the House for seven days. Everyone knows what happened when Mr Burns left this House. He went outside, said something and was handed 18 writs as a result. Each of the Cabinet Ministers who took out the writs against Mr Burns has been ordered by the courts to pay his costs. However, this Government will dip its hand into the till and use Government money to pay them. The matter that Mr Burns wanted to talk about was none other than the Fitzgerald inquiry.

Whilst Kevin Lingard was the Speaker, there were many instances when honourable members attempted to raise matters relating to the Fitzgerald inquiry and he continued to rule those matters sub judice, irrespective of what they pertained to. Honourable members simply need to read the Fitzgerald report, which states quite clearly that members of Parliament had a right to be raising such matters throughout the last two years. At that time Mr Lingard used his position as the Speaker to protect the Government of the day and the National Party. Tonight, if he is re-elected, I do not believe that he will act in any other way than he did previously.

I turn now to look at the track record of Mr Powell. On the one hand, he is a person who has shown fairness and who has been prepared to allow the ordinary member of Parliament to have a go, but on the other hand, the track record of Mr Lingard shows that he has not been prepared to let the Opposition have a go and has protected the Executive arm of Government and the National Party. If honourable members really want a new Queensland, tonight their only alternative is to vote for Mr Powell and ensure that he is re-elected as Speaker of this House. If the members on the Government side of the House do not have the guts to vote for Mr Powell, they should vote for no-one.

**Mr HINTON (Broadsound) (12.53 a.m.):** I wish to draw attention, as many other members have, to the Fitzgerald report, which has been produced after some two years of inquiry. It is a very creditable document and I am pleased that the Government has made the commitment to implement its recommendations in full. The Government will go down in history as one of the gutsiest Governments ever seen in this nation. If, when the Government goes to the polls at the end of this year, it is not returned in its own right, no other Government in Australia will have the courage of this Government to tackle corruption in this manner.

**An honourable member:** You don't believe that, do you?

**Mr HINTON:** I certainly believe that and honourable members opposite believe it because they know that it is quite right. No other Government has suffered the caning or the difficulty over the last two years that this Government has had because it supported this commission of inquiry. If the Government is not supported at the next poll and if it gets the caning that members opposite have been saying all night that it will get—I do not believe that will be the case—no other Government will have the courage to do what this Government has done to tackle corruption.

The public of Queensland should give full credit to the Government. As the Government puts into effect the program that is laid down in the report, this blueprint for Queensland, it will be recognised and appreciated by the Queensland public. Certainly at the next election the National Party will achieve the victory that it deserves. As I said, it is one of the gutsiest things that has been done in recent years and, despite all the prophecies of gloom and doom, we will reap the reward from that.

As many people have said today, it is very sad that we are sitting here at this time of the evening debating this subject instead of spending the time looking at this report and trying to implement its recommendations. Many members opposite have been trying to run away from the fact that today in this place there was a conspiracy. Today there was a tie-up between the former Speaker, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Sir Edward Lyons and the leaders of the opposition parties. Perhaps not all the members of those parties were aware of it.

**Mr Ardill:** That is nonsense.

**Mr HINTON:** It is a fact. The honourable member can run away from it all he likes, but it is a fact. In fact, by way of interjection the member for Stafford accepted the fact that he was waiting to see what the Government would do under that particular set of circumstances. That interjection was heard by those on this side of the Chamber. That is what has led to this debate and members opposite will be judged very harshly indeed by the people of Queensland on this affair.

**Mr Ardill:** There is no affair. It was a mistake by your blokes there.

**Mr HINTON:** No, there was no mistake.

When speaking to the election of a new Speaker, I wish to debate the actions of the former Speaker. I submit to this Chamber that the Speaker who resigned today is unfit for re-election to that position.

**Mr Prest:** You are the unfit person. You have been before the court for fraud.

**Mr HINTON:** If there was a Speaker in the chair during this debate, I would take a point of order on that. The honourable member's accusation is untrue. I ask him to have a look at the circumstances. Those sorts of comments have been made before, but they are untrue. He should take that into account before making false accusations to this Chamber.

I am suggesting that the former Speaker is not a fit person. Many times during this debate he has been praised in many ways. It is true that Mr Powell is a very capable parliamentarian; he has proved that over many, many years. He was quite a capable Minister, albeit he was slightly narrow-minded in the administration of the Education portfolio. However, as a parliamentarian and as someone who knew the rules and the conduct of this place, he did a fair job. For the most part of his handling of the House, probably the comments in his favour have been well justified, but I believe on two or three occasions he has demonstrated severe bias—I stress "bias"—which rules him unfit to hold that office. I wish to refer to an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 17 December 1987. It is headed "Not your place, Mr Speaker" and reads—

"Even in the Legislative Assembly the office of Speaker is rightly exalted: The proper courtesies are paid; no member may stand while the Speaker is on his feet; no member may pass between the Speaker and the House; all observations are addressed to the Speaker and not to the House. The respect due to the Speaker's office derives, however, from the necessary impartiality with which his duties should be discharged.

What a pity then that the new Speaker, Mr Powell, has already damaged that high office by bringing his impartiality into question. By calling for a meeting of National Party backbenchers in an attempt to resolve the Hinze affair, Mr Powell has involved himself in a party brawl. And in doing so, he has involved the office he holds in that same brawl, a tedious and nasty one at that.

It is specious for Mr Powell to claim that he was seeking the meeting as just another National Party member. For a start, he is not any National Party member but the Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. As such, his primary—almost his sole—responsibility is to the Parliament. Any pangs of loyalty that he might feel towards the party are, and must be, irrelevant. As well, Mr Powell used the prestige of his office in calling for the meeting."

I suggest to the House that that is the first serious example of Mr Powell's using his position in a biased manner for party-political activities.

I point out also to the House that another serious breach of his impartiality occurred as he approached the Merthyr by-election. I do not need to tell honourable members all that occurred at that time. Just prior to the by-election, he clearly dragged up the drug-related issue with teachers to create the maximum amount of difficulty for the Government and the maximum amount of embarrassment for the Premier for one purpose only—to damage the Premier at the time and to damage the party's chances in the Merthyr by-election. The Government will never know how much damage was caused. It can never be measured objectively. However, it was a calculated, vicious and vindictive act just prior to the by-election to cause the Government the maximum amount of damage. That action was created by a man who was supposed to hold an exalted and impartial position in this House. He let down the office which he was supposed to uphold.

**Mr Innes:** A deliberate leak to set up an excuse for a loss.

**Mr HINTON:** Absolute rubbish. If the honourable member believes in the tooth fairy, that is a fair comment. All members know that every Cabinet in this country leaks to a certain extent. When a memo is forwarded to every Cabinet Minister, it is inviting a leak, and that leak did occur. In fact, it was pre-determined that it would happen. The Leader of the Liberal Party is not so naive that he does not believe that.

**Mr Innes:** I would have to agree you could not send anything secure to Cabinet in Queensland.

**Mr HINTON:** No Cabinet in this country is secure. I suggest that the situation was deliberately created. Whether or not Mr Powell sent a fax to the media, we will never know. Of course, he denies it. However, once the matter hit the media, he exploited the situation to the full to create the maximum amount of damage for the Government. If they are the actions of an independent and unbiased Speaker, I will believe in the tooth fairy.

**Mr Innes:** It really didn't make any difference to the vote.

**Mr HINTON:** We will never know what difference it made. It is something we cannot measure. It is history and we will never know. However, it was not the action of a person fit to hold the office of Speaker of this House. That was quite clearly the view of the National Party Government at the time, because he was censured by his peers in his own party for that action. At that time, the National Party decided unanimously that he had taken that action for that purpose. No member on either side of the House could argue with the Government's thinking on the matter.

**Mr Sherlock:** His own electorate had a different view.

**Mr HINTON:** The honourable member is quite right. It is quite remarkable how loyal many local areas are to their member. The honourable member, who is an effective member in the Ashgrove electorate, would command a similar amount of loyalty. People do not like strangers coming into their area and pushing a person whom they consider to be their man around. That is what happened. However, I assure the honourable member that, after the incident that has occurred today, Mr Powell will be a lot less secure in his electorate than he was prior to this event.

**Mr White:** I wouldn't put money on that.

**Mr HINTON:** We will see how he travels. He will not be Speaker after the end of this debate. He will be a back-bencher and will be seen to be a back-bencher because of his actions today and because of the actions that honourable members opposite have taken in the knowledge of what was going to occur. Whether or not they were totally involved in orchestrating the matter or not, we will never know; but they were certainly aware of the events that were going to take place and positioned to take advantage of them as they saw them.

**Mr Innes:** What advantage is it to the people of Queensland to have gone through this charade today? It is no advantage. It demeans the House.

**Mr HINTON:** It does demean the House.

**Mr Innes:** And everybody knows that the Liberal Party will consistently support the ruling of the Speaker in this House. It is no surprise to anybody. We are absolutely predictable.

**Mr HINTON:** The credibility of a Government depends to a considerable extent on the smooth running of the House. When the House falls into disarray, as it has today, to a large extent the Government is blamed and it carries a lot of that weight irrespective of who caused the problem. It is in the Liberal Party's interests as an opposition party and it is in Mr Goss' interests and the Labor Party's interests to have chaos in the House. I suggest that they have enjoyed the exercise today, to their shame.

**Mr Innes:** Have you seen this morning's *Courier-Mail*?

**Mr HINTON:** Yes.

**Mr Innes:** The front page says that a Government source says that you knew all about this two weeks ago. What is your story? Did your Cabinet Ministers know that Mr Powell was going to attempt to——

**Mr HINTON:** I did not read that. I cannot comment on it. However, I assure the honourable member that, if he wanted to see shock and surprise, he should have looked at the Government back bench this morning. All members of our party were absolutely stunned by the events that occurred. One does not have to be a genius to work out that it was a stunt to achieve the effect that we have today.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr HINTON:** The member for Port Curtis, Mr Prest, can run away from it and shake his head all he likes, Mr Warburton can look stunned and Mr Innes can look innocent, but they cannot walk away from the fact that they have brought about a circumstance which has brought the Parliament into disrepute. That has been done for the purpose of creating chaos in this House for political purposes.

Mr Powell might very well find that he has miscalculated. I believe that that will in fact turn out to be the case because this Government will be sticking firm and will be sticking strong to its resolve, and that is something on which he has miscalculated.

**Mr Prest:** You're at the end of the road.

**Mr HINTON:** The honourable member should just wait until the election. If he comes up to my area, he will find out how much I am at the end of the road.

I can tell honourable members now that a Labor front-bencher comes into my electorate every week-end. I wish Labor members would keep coming up, because I enjoy it. I get more free publicity and more kudos out of their failed missions into my electorate than they would believe. I hope that they keep coming.

I am waiting for the member for Port Curtis to come to my electorate. I think I would really enjoy that because he is known as the dunce of the Parliament. The honourable member has the thickest head in this place. I am just waiting for him to come up to my electorate so that I can really enjoy myself.

**Mr Prest:** When it was put to you that you were a successful fraud, you said, "No, I'm not. I got caught."

**Mr HINTON:** No. The honourable member should check that.

I am very pleased to see the member for Windsor entering the Chamber, because he has been into my electorate quite a few times. He comes up with his environmental blurb. I might say that the environment is being very well looked after in Broadsound. I would like that placed on the record of the House tonight, because the last time the member for Windsor came up to my electorate, he had an article put in the *Morning Bulletin* stating that he was going to save the mangroves in Rosslyn Bay, where a new harbour is being built. The member for Windsor stated that he was going to save the mangroves and asked what Mr Hinton was doing about it. I issued a public challenge then—and I reiterate it today—for the member for Windsor to come up to my electorate and show me where the mangroves are in Rosslyn Bay harbour. Then we will both fight for them.

The penalties are very high now for illegal destruction of mangroves. It is \$6,000 for individuals and \$60,000 for corporations. A corporation is presently building a \$25m marina. If the member for Windsor can show me the mangroves, which have never grown there in the last 25 years, then I will help him and I will really fight hard for him. But they are not there. That just shows how much the member for Windsor knows about the environment in my area. I suggest that he do his homework a bit better before he comes into my area again and makes a complete fool of himself, as he did on that last occasion.

**Mr Stephan:** He didn't get lost on that occasion like he got lost on his horse in the citizens ride for democracy, did he? His horse found its way home but he had to be rescued.

**Mr HINTON:** No. He got politically lost. He did not get physically lost. He got politically lost. I do not think he will be coming up for another trot in the near future.

**Mr Schuntner:** What's this got to do with the election of the Speaker?

**Mr HINTON:** I will return to the debate on the election of Speaker.

Honourable members did listen to a very capable speech tonight by the former Speaker in which he appealed for his position. However, I suggest that it was one of the greatest exercises in hypocrisy that I have ever heard. I have listened to some hypocrisy in this House in the last two and a half years, but never during that time have I listened to such complete and utter drivel. I thought I was listening to Jesus Christ himself in this place tonight. He was a man of love, was he not? He was a man of goodwill. He never had a vestige of hatred in his heart, not an evil thought had ever crossed his mind.

There is no hate in this man's heart, no dislike for the Premier! I have even seen Mr Powell accused of that on television and he has been quite happy to acknowledge on television that in fact he hates the Premier, but not tonight. Tonight I thought that the Premier was his best friend. That was the way that he put himself forward. There was no malice, no vengeance. In regard to the meetings with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and "Top Level Ted" Lyons——

**An honourable member:** Ted wasn't very talkative.

**Mr HINTON:** As far as those meetings were concerned, it was sheer coincidence, of course, that they never discussed what he was about to do straight after lunch.

**Mr Borbidge:** Wasn't it strange how the TV cameras just happened to be there?

**Mr HINTON:** It was a remarkable coincidence. They just happened to know that they were coming and they were all waiting there for them.

That is a bit like the coincidence of Mr Goss and his crummy mob knowing what was going to happen, yet not being involved, not being implicated in any way. They have been running away from it all night. Members of the Opposition have got to face the facts. They knew what was going to happen, and they hoped that certain events would occur, which did in fact occur.

Here we had Mr Powell having lunch with the former Premier and with Sir Edward Lyons, all by coincidence——

**Mr Gilmore** interjected.

**Mr HINTON:** The conspirator is trotting again. Honourable members have seen him running up and down this side of the House all night checking how his votes are going, but they will not be there, because he is not on the Government side of the House.

This all occurred by coincidence. Mr Powell was going to come into this Chamber and do something quite historical in the history of the Queensland Parliament and, of course, he did not even happen to mention it to Ted Lyons or to Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It was never raised in conversation. Have honourable members ever heard such garbage and hypocrisy? I just cannot really believe what I heard.

Then, of course, honourable members heard a dissertation from the former Speaker on how a Parliament should be run, on how the Parliament should sit shorter hours, on how the Parliament should sit on more days, on how honourable members should go to bed earlier so that we do not have legislation by exhaustion. To that extent, I agree with some of the comments that have been made. We do have legislation by exhaustion. I personally would like to see that situation improve.

However, when Mr Powell was Leader of this House, what action did he take in that regard? None! That is what action he took—absolutely none! In fact honourable members sat in this Chamber for many nights, till all hours of the night, because those were the tactics that he determined. So it is no good Mr Powell waving this report around now and talking about what is good parliamentary democracy when he had his chance to perform and he failed.

**Mr Powell:** You've been here five minutes and you think you know everything.

**Mr HINTON:** The honourable member had his chance to perform in that area and he failed dismally.

**Mr Powell:** I've got the record and you haven't and never will have.

**Mr HINTON:** That could very well be. That will have to be a judgment of my peers and a judgment of history. However, I am not on trial here today. The honourable member is on trial here today. I am not on trial, and it is my right to comment—and I will comment—on the events that have gone on. Honourable members are faced with the election of a Speaker. Two members have been nominated.

**Mr Innes:** There was a complaint by Mr Burns in writing, alleging misleading of the House. It went to the Speaker. The Speaker had to deal with it. To move it to the Privileges Committee was obviously an appropriate way to deal with it. What was wrong with that?

**Mr HINTON:** That was a decision about which the honourable member will have to ask the Leader of the House. He has taken that decision. The issue has been aired over some considerable time. I believe there is a fair consensus in the community that it was not an issue of major importance and that a reasonable explanation was given by the Premier. I am quite happy about that.

I am concentrating on the two men who have been nominated for the position of Speaker. Both men have had an opportunity to prove themselves. Mr Lingard conducted himself in a very fair and proper manner. He was lauded by members on both sides of the Chamber for the performance he put in as Speaker. During his term as Speaker I heard no criticisms of him.

**Mr Innes:** He was sacked by you.

**Mr HINTON:** Events occurred and times changed. We all know what they were. That was about two and a half years ago. Time moves on in politics. We are not penalised for all time for things that may have occurred. If we were, heaven help us all. We are looking at the circumstances today and the creditworthiness of those two men for the position of Speaker.

During the time that Mr Lingard was Speaker, he was well respected by members on both sides of the Chamber. The criticisms made tonight by Mr Mackenroth were never heard during the time when Mr Lingard was Speaker. All we heard was how bad previous Speakers had been and how happy Opposition members were to have Mr Lingard in the position of Speaker. He was highly respected and very well thought of. Should he be returned as Speaker in the ballot that will be held, and I am quite certain that he will be, I have no doubt that he will perform that same job with total empathy for both sides of the House.

On the other hand, as I have said, as far as the major conduct of the House was concerned, Mr Powell was well received. However, there were three bad sets of circumstances which demonstrated a bias. When he saw an opportunity to drive a knife into the Premier and into the Government, which he has left, he put his hand squarely and firmly on that knife and drove it home. That happened initially with the Hinze affair; it happened before the Merthyr by-election; and I believe it has happened here today and will be seen as such by the members of the Queensland public. It is certainly the way I see it and it is certainly the way that members on this side of the Chamber see

it, particularly with the last event when Mr Powell was censured unanimously by his whole party for biased conduct. That is certainly the way that the Government sees it. There is a very fair case to argue that Mr Powell is an unfit person to hold the office of Speaker.

**Mr Lee:** What you are saying didn't affect the Merthyr result, did it?

**Mr HINTON:** We will never know.

**Mr Lee:** There's the proof.

**Mr HINTON:** The member for Merthyr has a lovely smiling face. I thought that he might be making his maiden speech tonight. I have been waiting in expectation to hear it. However, we will never know the effect of Mr Powell's conduct on the Merthyr by-election. Not one Government member would suggest for one moment that it had a good effect on the Government, would he? Would there be anybody in the Chamber who would suggest to us that it was beneficial to the Government?

**Mr Innes:** Your secret decision kept from the people of Queensland had a worse effect on you.

**Mr HINTON:** Our secret decision?

**Mr Innes:** No publication was made of that change of fundamental policy at all. I was still advising people who came to my office that they had no hope. You changed a major policy in December last year. We didn't discover it until during the campaign. That is the truth.

**Mr HINTON:** Whether that is true or not, I am not prepared to debate it. However, I am prepared to debate this point: it was not the role of the Speaker, who is supposed to be independent, to shaft the Government two weeks before a by-election and to do it the maximum amount of damage and then still claim to be an unbiased person to hold the office of Speaker in this Chamber. That was not his role. Irrespective of how that decision came about, whether the Leader of the Liberal Party is right or wrong, the actions taken by the Speaker were dead wrong. There are no two ways about that.

**Mr Schuntner:** Wind it up.

**Mr HINTON:** I wind up that segment.

I am going to say a few words about the report, particularly the reference to the electoral side of it. In the last few days honourable members have heard a great deal from members of the Opposition and read in the newspapers about the issue of electoral reform in Queensland.

**Mr Scott:** Haven't you got to milk the cows or something?

**Mr HINTON:** If I did anything, it would be to feed the pigs. The honourable member should not worry about it.

To a very large extent, an admission has been made that the Government's program to implement the recommendations regarding police corruption has been very well received. The Government will be supported very strongly for implementing those recommendations. I put to honourable members that the recommendations on electoral reform to a very large extent, if not totally, were outside Mr Fitzgerald's terms of reference. It was a surprise to the Government that those recommendations were made in the report. I do not believe that that was an area that should have been involved. There is no way that any rational or reasonable person can link electoral boundaries with corruption in the State. There is no reasonable rationale to connect the two factors.

**Mr Lee:** I kept that speech of yours about foreign land ownership. If you are going to keep this up, I have it here——

**Mr HINTON:** The honourable member should hang onto it. It is good stuff and there is no way in the world that I am going to stop pursuing that item. It is very, very sound policy. The Leader of the Liberal Party rubbished it hell, west and crooked in this Chamber. If the Government was to introduce a policy whereby it used its foreign land register to identify foreign ownership and taxed at specific rates in specific areas to bring about specific results, we would be doing a good job and putting forward the first positive step in this country to control undesirable foreign investment.

**Mr Innes:** You will have to excuse us for a bit of confusion. Last week Martin Tenni came out and rubbished the FIRB and said, "Get rid of the whole thing, box and dice." The national conference of the National Party says, "Strengthen it and make it tougher." What is the problem? You have a private view.

**Mr HINTON:** Yes, I certainly have a very strong private view that foreign investment is not needed in rural and urban development. It is certainly involved in the tourist industry, and I do not believe that that is in the best interests of Queensland.

The Government recognises that foreign investment can be an advantage, particularly in high-technology manufacturing, if the necessary facilities are not available in Australia. Although I do not intend to debate that issue tonight, I have very strong personal views on the matter which I intend to maintain.

I was mentioning the electoral system and said that I do not believe that it was included in Mr Fitzgerald's terms of reference. It is absurd for the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Opposition to make the assertion that corrupt electoral boundaries led to police corruption in this State. Last year the electoral system received a mandate from the people of Queensland when they voted 55 per cent in favour of the current system.

**Mr Innes:** It is not just police corruption.

**Mr HINTON:** Mr Powell said that while he was a Minister he saw no evidence of corruption in the Cabinet. That is the very same story that I have heard from Minister after Minister. Naive as I may be, during my time as a member of this House I have not seen or heard evidence of any corruption in the Government. What occurred was as big a surprise to me as it obviously was to Mr Powell and everybody else in the community.

**Mr Powell:** You're surely not saying that the boundaries are corrupt?

**Mr HINTON:** I am not saying that they are corrupt. I am saying that they have been accused of being corrupt. Furthermore, our electoral system was supported by the people of Queensland.

For many years the electoral system has been an issue of great debate. It has been attacked by the Liberal Party year in and year out. The Federal Government finally got the courage to put the issue to a referendum. The present system of weightage was supported in every State of Australia and by 55 per cent of Queenslanders. Before members opposite call the present system corrupt, they should consider that result. Mr Schuntner can shake his head all he likes, but I am quite sure that if he looks at the votes in his electorate, probably he will find that a positive result was obtained.

**Mr Innes:** The corruption it imposes upon this State—the people of the type you find on the back bench and the front bench over there don't understand the principles, defy the principles and take this State off the straight and narrow.

**Mr HINTON:** What does that have to do with boundaries?

**Mr Borbidge:** Tell them who administered the criminal justice system in Queensland for 26 years—the Liberal Attorneys-General.

**Mr HINTON:** That is quite true.

The Liberal Party has the right to criticise anyone who is put forward from any electorate. However, members of the Liberal Party know that it is absurd to say that the boundaries or the electoral system caused the problem. It is high time that we stopped this kerfuffle.

That this has become the major issue in the media in the few days since the release of the Fitzgerald report highlights to me and other Government members the lack of problems in the remainder of the report and the actions that the Government is taking with respect to implementing the report. The Government is moving quickly to introduce in the spring session legislation for the electoral commission. Honourable members cannot ask for faster action than that. The Government is moving at top speed to implement those recommendations.

I ask honourable members to suppose that the electoral commission recommended the elimination of all zones in Queensland and the introduction of one vote, one value. Members opposite would expect an enormous electoral windfall. But where would it be? A high proportion of National Party seats is located on the south and north coasts. The electorate of Fassifern contains 26 000-odd voters and I understand that Somerset has a similar figure. The major growth areas are National Party territory.

Recently I read an article by John Stubbs in the *Australian*. He came to the conclusion that the Liberal Party would pick up one extra seat in Brisbane but would lose the seat of Mount Isa and, all other things being equal, would be no better off in terms of the number of seats. Whereas the National Party could lose up to six seats in the country and north and western zones—

**Mr Innes** interjected.

**Mr HINTON:** All other things being equal; that is the analysis.

The National Party could lose up to six country, north and western seats, but at the same time it could pick up four seats on the north and south coasts and be two seats worse off, and the Labor Party would be two seats better off.

**Mr Lickiss** interjected.

**Mr HINTON:** That is a fair question. Although it would not hurt the National Party very much as far as seats are concerned, it would hurt Queensland enormously. There would be a massive drift of membership of Parliament from northern, western and central Queensland down into the south-east corner. In fact, 63 per cent of the members of this Parliament would be within 100 kilometres of the GPO in Brisbane. That is what the Government is worried about—proper development for Queensland. If there is not proper representation right across the State, money will follow power. The money will go to where the representation is. If we want decentralised development across Queensland, there must be fair representation across the State.

The Government would not lose anywhere near as many seats as the Liberal Party, in its propaganda, is suggesting. In relation to fair and equal development and representation of its people, Queensland would certainly be very much the loser. That is where the major loss would occur.

**Mr Innes:** That's absolute garbage.

**Mr HINTON:** It is not absolute garbage. If the honourable member studied the number of people within the electorates, he would find that, all other things being equal, the National Party would not be disadvantaged anywhere near as much as is suggested.

**Mr Innes:** Why is it that the smallest seats are losing the most population? They are the best served. Why are the seats of 8 000 losing people?

**Mr HINTON:** Because of the natural drift to the cities that has occurred. But that is not what I am saying. I am saying that the major areas of population growth in this

State are National Party country and that the Liberal Party is publishing this constant propaganda in the full knowledge that it is garbage.

I will wind up because my friend opposite, the member for Windsor, has been giving me wind-up signs for some time. Two choices are available to honourable members tonight. There are two candidates for the Speakership. Both men have served in this position. One has proved himself in this role to be independent and has given the Parliament good service. The other has proved himself to be a capable parliamentarian but guilty of repeated bias which has brought his particular position into disrepute. Mr Lingard should be elected to the position of Speaker.

**Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (1.33 a.m.):** Mr Woodward——

**Mr Comben:** You were asleep.

**Mr STEPHAN:** No. I was waiting for Mr Comben to jump.

It gives me much pleasure to join in this debate and support the nomination of Mr Lingard for the position of Speaker. Today we have heard and seen politics and politicians at work. Much has been said about parliamentarians, but what has actually been seen is politicians, rather than parliamentarians, at work. Irrespective of how hard we might try to distance ourselves from the fact that we are politicians and try to be parliamentarians, there is a big difference.

The claim has been made that what occurred earlier today was not rigged. If that is the case, it was a remarkable coincidence that, when the Speaker and the Sergeant-at-Arms walked out of the Chamber with the mace this afternoon, TV cameras were just outside the door. That is not something that would have happened in normal circumstances, because it is not usual for TV cameras to be seen in that vicinity. It is obvious that they were invited, otherwise they would not have been there. As far as I am concerned, that spells out fairly well what the story is. Regardless of some of the other statements and arguments that have been put forward today, the story is still the same.

By listening to some of the comments, it is interesting to note the change of attitude of some members opposite since the previous debate on an election of Speaker. A number of instances can be recalled, not the least of which is the contribution made by Mr Ardill. He epitomised the Labor Party's attitude when he went out of his way to point out how wonderful and how good a fellow Mr Lingard was. On 2 December 1987 he said—

“After all I had heard about the ridiculous performances in this Chamber, I was pleasantly surprised to see the dignity that Mr Lingard brought to this House . . . Mr Lingard occupied that chair with great dignity and in the time-honoured traditions of the Westminster system.”

That is an indication of the attitude of the Labor Party and of Mr Ardill. They have not adhered to that. It is obvious that they have changed their attitude to suit their own particular whims and fancies.

Mr Innes made some quite forthright comments. He said that this House should be debating the Fitzgerald report. I guess I agree with that. All of us came to this House today with the intention of debating it. However, because the Parliament decided on a certain course of action, that has not occurred. This is what the Parliament is all about; this is what we are elected for. The Parliament made a decision.

**Mr Comben:** You wouldn't know what we are elected for.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Mr Comben does not agree with that. However, that is his right.

Parliament made a decision and the Speaker then decided to stand down. He was not compelled to do so. There was no need for him to do so. By his decision he denied the House the right to debate the Fitzgerald report.

Mr Innes also spoke about the special branch, which apparently at one stage investigated some of his activities. He said he was thankful that it was the particular policeman who did a check on him rather than some other policeman. The question I ask is: why? If that is the case, does he have something to hide? Is he frightened that somebody else would have found out something?

**Mr Innes:** What a dirty, rotten lie.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I have asked the question. The honourable member made the comment that it was just as well that somebody else did not carry out the investigation.

**Mr Innes:** It was done to get political dirt on me without any basis.

**Mr STEPHAN:** The honourable member is a little bit testy about it. All I have done is ask the question. I did not make the statement. Obviously he is worried about it. I have hit a raw nerve. Again I ask why he is worried about some other investigator who may have been carrying out these activities.

**Mr Innes:** I hear you like little boys. Is that right?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr Innes:** Do you like little boys?

**Mr STEPHAN:** That's the most ridiculous comment I have ever heard. That is the intelligence that we have come to expect from honourable members opposite. By looking at the colour of the honourable member's face, I suppose it is an indication of what he is looking for. If a change of Government means that Queensland society will move along those lines, that is cause for a great deal of concern in the future.

Comments are made about legislation being rushed through the Parliament. Before Parliament resumed this afternoon, accusations were made that the Government would not take the action that members of the Opposition thought it should, and that the Government would take its time, particularly in the case of electoral reform. Over the last couple of days, the comment has been made that legislation to bring about electoral reform should be introduced immediately. However, how often is the comment made that legislation is rushed through the Parliament? How often is criticism directed at insufficient thought and preparation being given to the presentation of Bills? How often is concern expressed about whether legislation will meet the needs of the community over a long period?

The Government has given an undertaking that electoral reform legislation will be introduced that will serve the interests of Queenslanders throughout this State and not merely those who live in the south-east area. The member for Broadsound, who preceded me in this debate, went out of his way to point out that the Government had given that undertaking and that the National Party has nothing to fear from the introduction of that type of legislation. He pointed out that the National Party would not lose anything if a redistribution took place. The whole State benefits from Government that is truly representative and not predominantly concerned with the interests of the south-east area or the city of Brisbane.

I remind honourable members that the south-east portion is only a small part of this State. If decentralisation and proper representation are desirable, encouragement and support has to be provided for people who live in the more remote areas. I believe that many people who live in the city do not spend enough time outside built-up areas and do not realise what it is like to live in provincial and rural areas. If they spent more time in country areas, they would become familiar with problems associated with droughts, floods, pests and famine. I am pleased to note that Mr Davis has arrived back from his sojourn in Tasmania.

The member for Lytton is renowned for being a little difficult in this Parliament, but it was interesting to note that he complimented Mr Powell on his role as Speaker. On many occasions I have observed Mr Burns being as difficult as possible and being

asked by the Speaker, Mr Powell, to withdraw from the Chamber. On those occasions, Mr Burns did not commend the Speaker; in fact, possibly more than any other member he has regularly defied Speakers' rulings. Probably more than anybody else, he has seen fit to be difficult and insist on having his own way. Under those circumstances, the Speaker saw fit to exercise his authority, which is, of course, his right.

I cannot help but comment on the speech made by Mr De Lacy. He has a very convenient memory and has failed to appreciate the true position of other States in relation to inquiries into corruption. He said that other States in Australia do not need to hold an inquiry such as the Fitzgerald inquiry which was carried out in Queensland. When he spoke about the Fitzgerald report and the Sturgess report, he seemed to think that corruption stopped at the Queensland border and that nothing untoward occurs in New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia. Obviously, he does not read the newspapers and does not listen to media comments on events taking place in those States. The fact of the matter is that representatives from southern States have been coming to Queensland to examine the guide-lines and the manner in which the Fitzgerald inquiry has been carried out. Although they have taken information back to the other States, they have not had the courage or the will to undertake a similar inquiry.

It will ultimately be to their disadvantage that they fail to take steps to control corruption. They will not be able to hide behind the belief that everything in the garden is rosy and that no remedial action is necessary. At some time in the future, it will be necessary to right the wrongs and repair the damage that has been caused by corruption. These are not my words but those used to express the attitudes of many people throughout Australia, particularly in the southern States. South Australia announced its intention to undertake a closed inquiry but realised that unless the inquiry was an open hearing, the Government would be crucified.

Mention was also made of Mr Hooper, a former member of the Opposition who tried to control corruption. It is interesting to note that the Labor Party saw fit to sack Mr Hooper from his position as Opposition spokesman for Police when he was making certain accusations. If he was doing such a good job and carrying out his role in such a splendid manner, why did the Labor Party see fit to remove him as its Police spokesman? That question has not been answered; nor has a reason ever been given, except that it was suggested he may have found it difficult to withstand the pressure. I suggest that the reasons went further than that. I suggest that the Labor Party did not appreciate the comments he made and did not support him.

**Mr Prest:** God, you're a bore!

**Mr STEPHAN:** The honourable member for Port Curtis does not like to hear comments of that nature or to have the truth thrown at him. He still has not said why the Opposition threw out Mr Hooper. The honourable member for Port Curtis was his friend, but Mr Hooper was sacked from his position. If he was doing a good job, then surely he should have been left in that position.

I note that Mr Beard is concerned that the Fitzgerald report might slip off the front pages of the newspapers. He seems to think that there is a great desire or need to have the report on the front pages and that it is serving a useful purpose there. If the honourable member had listened to the people out in the community, he would have realised that they are very upset and would be pleased to see the Fitzgerald report out of the way, off the front pages, so that Queenslanders can return to their normal lifestyles. There are more things happening and more positive aspects to consider in Queensland than the Fitzgerald inquiry. Ninety-nine per cent of the population of Queensland are waiting to go forward with confidence. They want the recommendations of the report implemented in a positive way. They want to continue with the work that they have been trying to do for a long time. It will not be of any help to the State as a whole to have Fitzgerald-type reports on the front page to highlight what is happening in this State.

Many comments were made about the so-called gerrymander and the weightage system in Queensland. As has been pointed out, the weightage system is in place for the benefit of those people living in the far-flung areas of the State. It is interesting to note what has happened in some of the other States in Australia. What would the media have said if the conservative parties had won office in Western Australia with only 47 per cent of the vote? And what about Tasmania?

**Mr Braddy:** How many voters do you have in your electorate?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I have between 16 500 and 17 000 voters in my electorate and if the honourable member thinks it is not enough or it is too many, that is his business. My electorate is in a country area and it must be realised that people living in country areas have greater distances to travel than do people living in provincial areas.

**Mr Campbell:** Not Maryborough.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Mr Campbell can ride around his part of Bundaberg on a push-bike if he wishes. He cannot compare his electorate with some of the far-flung electorates.

In Western Australia the Labor Party won office with 47 per cent of the vote. I wonder if the Labor Party would have kept quiet if the conservative parties had done the same.

**Mr Braddy:** Are you aware that the Labor Party tried to do away with the gerrymander and the Upper House blocked it?

**Mr STEPHAN:** The Labor Party in Queensland did away with the Upper House and introduced the zonal system. Now the Opposition is saying that the Labor Party does not want the zonal system. The members of the Opposition have convenient memories. It is very convenient for them to be able to say at this time that they do not want it because they do not happen to agree with it.

What about the amount of support the Labor Party received in Tasmania? It received almost 97 000 votes, which represented 34 per cent of the total vote. The Liberal Party received 131 000 votes, or 46 per cent of the total vote, and yet the Labor Party is governing Tasmania. Is the honourable member for Rockhampton supporting that? He often complains about Queensland.

**Mr Braddy:** What was the combined Labor and Green vote?

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is not what the Opposition says when it looks at the vote here in Queensland and the support it receives in this State. He is ducking for cover and is not taking the whole story into account.

The fact is that in Tasmania the Labor Party holds Government with only 37 per cent of the vote. Whether the honourable member likes it or not, it is a fact. If the Labor Party can justify the position in Tasmania, it can justify it in any other State. The Opposition is prepared to say that it is right in Tasmania but it says it is not right in Queensland. In the last 30 years, irrespective of where the boundaries were drawn, the Labor Party still has not received anywhere near 50 per cent of the vote. I believe that the highest vote it has ever received was 44 per cent, which is not particularly high. The members of the Opposition cry poor, they cry wolf and they cry that the boundaries have caused the Labor Party to be kept out of office. The Labor Party does not have the policies or the support in the community. It is trying to get support by saying, "Look at me. I'm looking for a little bit of extra help. Come and give me assistance." If the Opposition continues with that attitude, it will not help itself.

**Honourable members interjected.**

**Mr STEPHAN:** It is interesting to listen to the comments across the Chamber, but the fact is that the Labor Party does not have the support in Queensland and, unless it changes its attitude, that situation will remain.

In the last 12 months the Public Accounts Committee has been formed in Queensland. Accountability has become an important consideration in Queensland and in other States. The Public Accounts Committee is thus setting out to play its role very well in this State.

**Opposition members interjected.**

**Mr STEPHAN:** I see some grins on the other side of the Chamber.

The chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is Mr Gil Alison. Some members would be aware that the first investigation of the committee is into primary production. That is not the only area in which accountability is required. It is a fact that this State suffers from both drought and floods. Under those conditions producers need and deserve some support so that they can continue production. If the State is not prepared to give support by way of subsidy or assistance, particularly to those in the far-flung areas of the State, those areas may as well be closed and treated as if they do not exist. If we want people to live in those areas, they have to be given a little more support. I am not saying that that support should be abused, but there appear to have been times when the assistance was not spent in the manner in which it was meant to be spent. The Commonwealth Government is also involved in drought and flood relief programs. The guide-lines are laid down by the State and Commonwealth Governments, which also determine the means by which the subsidies and other support are given.

The Public Accounts Committee is starting to play its role to ensure accountability in this State. What I have found is that it is not so much the fact that the committee is likely to investigate every authority in the State, but the fear that there may be an investigation that is really helping to put accountability in place and to ensure that Queensland leads the way as a place to live. In exports, taxation and the many other facets of life, Queensland is leading the way. I am very pleased to be a part of that and I am pleased that I am part of a Government that will ensure that this will continue.

**Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (1.56 a.m.):** I rise to support the nomination of Mr Kevin Lingard, the member for Fassifern, for the position of Speaker of this Assembly. I do so with great pleasure. He was Speaker up until the end of November 1987. He did a very excellent job and carried out his duties with dignity and in a spirit of co-operation with the members of the House. With his good wife and gracious lady, Alison, he did a very excellent job. He showed strength in the chair and set precedents for the panel of temporary chairman to follow. I am quite sure he will do an excellent job again and I am very pleased to give him my support.

**Mr Prest:** Thanks very much. Sit down.

**Mr ALISON:** I am very pleased that the member for Port Curtis is pleased with my comments. I expect that he will come to this side of the House and vote for Mr Lingard.

**Mr Prest:** I am not that stupid. I am not corrupt.

**Mr ALISON:** That is very interesting. The honourable member for Port Curtis could confuse me by saying he is not corrupt.

I express my regret at seeing the former Speaker, Mr Lin Powell, make the decisions that he has made today which have effectively brought his career as Speaker to a conclusion. I think it is a great pity. I heard all of Mr Powell's speech earlier in the debate. Quite frankly, I cannot accept all of the statements made by him. There seem to be far too many coincidences. They give his whole story a bit of, shall I say, discolouration.

I was particularly interested to hear Mr Powell say, if I heard him correctly, that six or eight weeks ago he asked his secretary to invite Sir Edward Lyons and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen to lunch today. That implies that at that time he knew that the House would be sitting today.

**Mr Borbidge:** Perhaps he is a mystic.

**Mr ALISON:** That is a possibility, but I do not think it could be so.

I find that statement very intriguing because from other sources I understand that six or eight weeks ago nobody knew that the House would be sitting today. Perhaps at some future time Mr Powell might comment on that. That is just one of the aspects of the speech of the former Speaker that I find quite interesting, intriguing and, really, unacceptable.

Mr Powell claimed to understand the Westminster system. If he did, why did he get so involved in public controversy? As I understand the Westminster system, the Speaker of the House should avoid public controversy. Of course, I am referring to the fairly recent controversy over the Government's policy of reinstating rehabilitated teachers who have been convicted some years ago of minor drug offences. The way Mr Powell, as Speaker at the time, went to press was quite extraordinary. At the time I was quite staggered because on numerous occasions I had heard Mr Powell say that he understood the Westminster system and regarded it as the best democratic system in the world. Yet at that time he carried on in that manner and his actions on other issues indicated a great lack of understanding of the Westminster system. I could not understand why he got involved in those controversies in the first place.

I will direct some remarks to the Fitzgerald report. I have not been able to read all that I would want to read. I will attend to that in the course of time. However, some of what I have read surprised me. Page 127 deals with electoral laws. Tonight, comment has been made on the reason why Mr Fitzgerald picked on electoral laws as being relevant to his report to Parliament in regard to corruption. In particular, I note that he commented on the fairness of the electoral process in Queensland being in question. He stated—

“The concerns which are most often stated focus broadly upon the electoral boundaries, which are seen as distorted in favour of the present Government, so as to allow it to retain power with minority support.”

I do not see what that has to do with corruption. I will have more to say about that in a later speech.

I am pleased to give my support to Mr Lingard.

**Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (2.02 a.m.):** I have great pleasure in speaking in this debate. This is a sorry day for the State of Queensland. The former Speaker has performed an excellent and honest job. He was the only honest member of the National Party. Today, he has virtually been crucified by the actions of the National Party. It is hard to understand what has brought about that action. Lin Powell had been a conscientious member of the National Party. No doubt, he saw what was going on within his own party and how it had degenerated to a very low ebb, which brought about the necessity for the Fitzgerald inquiry. That has brought great shame to Queensland.

I give no credit to the Premier of this State when he says that the inquiry was instigated through his strong, positive leadership and great vision. Of course, when the former Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was overseas, poor old Bill Gunn backed himself into a corner, should have said “No” when he said “Yes” and did not have a clue what he was leading his party into.

If the members of Cabinet say that they were not aware of what was going on, they were ignorant. The late Kevin Hooper, the then member for Archerfield, spoke of prostitution, corrupt police, corrupt practices, deals being made by the National Party Government of the day with builders and developers and the cronyism that was being carried on. If we had taken notice of the late Kevin Hooper, the costly investigation that has been carried out and the report that has been tabled, which we should have been able to debate today, would not have been necessary. However, too many people in the National Party tried to take the people of Queensland for a ride and played very well the role of hearing nothing, seeing nothing, doing nothing and saying nothing.

In 1968, the Premier, Mr Mike Ahern, entered Parliament. In 1980, he became a Minister. During that time, corruption and graft was a growth industry in this State. In December 1987, he became the Premier.

In 1977, Brian Austin entered Parliament and in 1980 he became a Minister. He also was too dumb to know that members——

**Mr Ahern:** You are reading from the handbook to keep going.

**Mr PREST:** Yes, I will. The Premier has been part of shonky deals with Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Russ Hinze, Don Lane and, as Russ Hinze said, many others whom he will name if he is taken before a court. He has threatened the Premier.

**Mr Ahern:** He may name you.

**Mr PREST:** If he names me, I will be able to get out of it. However, I am certain that the Premier will not be able to get out of it. He may think that he has been in the Parliament for a long time and that he is a sweet and clean person, but that is not the case. He has been here for a long period, yet he has seen nothing, heard nothing, said nothing and done nothing. Now he wants the people of Queensland to believe that he is the strong leader that Queensland has been looking for. In the near future, Queensland will have a new leader. When this debate concludes, the member for Isis will return to the Chamber as Speaker and the Government will be forced into action that it will not want to take. Lin Powell has been a very fair Speaker.

**Mr Alison:** That's not what you said earlier.

**Mr PREST:** Yes, it is. During the period that I have been in this Chamber, I have had a great friendship with Lin. He got that little grub Sherrin into this place; now Sherrin is ratting on him. If it were not for Lin Powell when he was Education Minister, the member for Mansfield would just be nil. He was not worth a crummet. Lin Powell got the member for Mansfield into this place, and now the honourable member is turning into a real National Party stalwart, a real grub.

I could tell honourable members the history of all the members of the Government because I have been in this place for quite a while now. There is the old airline stewards' friend, Mr Muntz. Do honourable members want me to talk about him? That is the man who has spent millions of dollars protecting the environment of Queensland! Mr Muntz is a greenie at heart, he reckons. Of course, the only time that he becomes a greenie is when he is down on the grass. I do not mind saying that.

I support Lin Powell. I am quite certain that if honourable members are as wise as they should be and have the respect for an unbiased and very competent person that they should have, they will vote for the member for Isis, Lin Powell.

**Mr WELLS (Murrumba) (2.09 a.m.):** Mr Clerk, may I begin by congratulating you on the fair and unbiased way in which you have conducted this debate. The sort of chairmanship that honourable members have seen, sir, while you were in control of the House was something which goes far beyond any of the accolades, any of the adulation, that has been dished out to previous Speakers.

Honourable members have been vying with one another to try to sing the praises of people who have occupied the exalted station of Speaker of this Parliament. Honourable members have heard paeans of praise in favour of the honourable member for Fassifern, Kev Lingard. They have heard adulatory statements supporting the Honourable Lin Powell. But none, sir, have come anywhere near to rivalling your unbiased chairmanship. Never in the history of parliamentary governance have we seen somebody who, with so little interference in the course of debate, with such impartiality and with such objectivity, has conducted the affairs of the House. Sir, if the history of Westminster Parliaments goes for ever, no-one will ever be able to exceed your record of impartiality.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr WELLS:** I hate to miss a remark by the honourable member for Gympie. I am afraid that history will not record a remark by the honourable member for Gympie. That pearl which dropped from his lips is now going to vanish into the mists of the past because although he was prepared to say it when he could not be heard, he was not prepared to say it when he could be heard.

I rise to speak more in sorrow than in anger. It would be hard to sustain anger at this hour of the day. Nevertheless, I do rise more in sorrow than in anger because today this House is risking losing something very valuable, something which fell into our laps by a sheer coincidence, by a quirk of fate. I refer to the Westminster convention of the Speakership.

I would like to advise the House of the Westminster convention of the Speakership. That is a convention which has operated in the Westminster Parliament, and it operates to the great benefit of parliamentary democracy. The convention is that the Speaker is above politics. He does not belong to either political party. On becoming Speaker, he resigns from the political party to which he was previously affiliated. He is subsequently not opposed in his electorate and he continues as an independent Speaker.

The role of the Speaker in the Westminster system is to support the Government on motions of confidence and all those circumstances where it is necessary for a Speaker to vote. Of course, in the event, it is very rarely the case that the Speaker has to vote, but the convention is that he will support the Government of the day no matter what political party constitutes that Government, and he supports that Government of the day whether or not that Government is of the same complexion as the party from which he originally sprang.

That convention is one which is entirely salubrious and one which is entirely salutary to the democratic institution which this Parliament is supposed to exemplify. It is so because it means that a Speaker, being above politics, is able to be an impartial arbiter. He is able to run the affairs of the House without being beholden to this side of politics or that. He is able fearlessly and without bias to represent the Parliament and the essence of parliamentary dignity not only to the wider constituency which the Parliament represents but also to the world, as well as to the Governor, or the monarch in the case of Britain.

Until today, that institution was one which it was possible to accept into Queensland. That institution existed in embryonic form in Queensland by virtue of the fact that by a series of political coincidences, we had an independent Speaker, a Speaker who was not a member of any political party. Obviously, just as Lin Powell was, every Speaker will be a political animal. Every Speaker will come to the position with an ideology. Every Speaker will have political ideas of his own.

When Lin Powell was a Minister, he had the opportunity to implement those political ideas, and members of the Opposition disagree vehemently with what he did as a Minister. However, a political ideology is a complicated thing, and it was part of this man's political ideology that the role of Speaker should be independent, that the role of Speaker should be unbiased, that a Speaker has obligations above those which he held to the political party of which he was a member. Even before he ceased to be a member of the National Party, Lin Powell started to exemplify the capacities of independence in Speakership which we see exemplified by the best of Westminster Speakers.

As an Independent, he then became capable of fulfilling the Westminster model. He was beyond the control of any political party in this Chamber. What is likely to be thrown away if Lin Powell is not returned to the Speakership of this House is that lack of bias, that freedom from party-political control. He will be replaced by somebody who will be of a party-political complexion. That person will be subject to party-political control. He will attend National Party caucus meetings. He will receive riding instructions from National Party caucus meetings. His first job in that chair will be to effect a cover-up. That cover-up——

**Government members interjected.**

**Mr WELLS:** One fool at a time. I am happy to answer what they have to say, but I can only hear one of them at a time. Would the Honourable the Minister care to say——

**Mr Borbidge:** I give way to the expert.

**Mr WELLS:** The Minister is referring to his colleague on his left. Perhaps Mr Neal would like to tell us what he had to say. Is it not amazing that these turkeys are prepared to interject as much as they like while I am speaking, but when I pause and ask them to record their remarks in history, they are prepared to talk but they are not prepared to stand by the import of their words?

**Mr Borbidge:** What about Mrs Childs? What about Madam Speaker in the House of Representatives?

**Mr WELLS:** I fail to perceive the Minister's point. I know Mr Borbidge wants me to talk about Joan Child. It is not "Childs", plural, it is "Child", singular. But what did he have to say about her? I am really very interested in what he has to say.

**Mr Borbidge:** Tell us about how independent she is. Tell us about the record she has got.

**Mr Hamill:** He finds it incredible that someone is actually interested to hear what he has to say.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank Mr Hamill for his helpful interjection. This might explain why Mr Borbidge is so incapable of articulating what he has to ruminate about. He can ruminate, he can verbalise, but he cannot articulate.

**Mr Borbidge:** Tell us about the contempt with which your party has treated the Speakership in the House of Representatives.

**Mr WELLS:** The Speakership in the House of Representatives has been handled with dignity, with courage and with grace. I would venture to say that even in Canberra they did not have the advantage which certain honourable members—I do not know which of them they are—are prepared to forfeit now. Even in Canberra they did not have the advantage of a Speaker who was not tied to the party-political complexion. Here, for a brief space of history we had a Speaker who was not going to party caucus meetings, who was not receiving riding instructions and who was not bound by a commitment to his colleagues to behave in one way rather than in another. However much a Speaker who is a member of a political party may try to rise above party-political considerations, he would not be able to do it as well as Lin Powell would be able to do it in principle as an independent Speaker. It just cannot be done. That is something that is being forfeited.

If the hot-heads on the National Party side have their way, that chance will be lost and instead we will have in the chair a Speaker whose first riding instruction is to effect a cover-up, whose first determination is going to have to be that document which was sent to the Speaker by Tom Burns. His determination will be that that will vanish into history, that it will not be referred to the Privileges Committee, and that will be the end of it. His first job will be to cover up the very matter that precipitated this whole event.

The former Speaker acted in response to the inevitabilities of the circumstances. When the former Speaker came into the House, he had absolutely no choice. He could not, consistent with his beliefs about the independence and impartiality of the Speakership, make a determination on the letter that was before him. He had to refer it to the Privileges Committee. The reason he did that was twofold. First, he did not think he should make a decision which affected himself, because under the Westminster convention governing an independent Speaker it was inappropriate for the Speaker to make such a determination since it would have to be made on political grounds—it involved a political action he had taken in the past—and it would be embracing a political position for him

to make any determination, and therefore he had to refer it to someone else. Above and beyond that, there was a principle which transcends even Westminster democracy, and that is the principle of natural justice. The principle of natural justice—*audi alteram partem*—is the principle that no-one should be a judge in his or her own cause. Last afternoon, if the Speaker was to have made a determination on that letter that was before him, he would have been acting as a judge in his own cause. That, the Speaker very properly did not do. He was not prepared to sully his record. He was not prepared to sully the time he had spent in that Speakership by acting as a judge in his own cause, nor was he prepared to take a political stand from the chair.

There was an inevitability about the series of events that occurred this afternoon. In the face of that inevitability, what occurred? Here we are, two days after Fitzgerald day—F-day plus two—two days after the Premier in his wisdom has declared that he is going to implement the Fitzgerald report lock, stock and barrel. What does he do? He undoes the one piece of the Fitzgerald jigsaw which is already in place. He had an independent Speaker and he is doing away with him and replacing him with a party hack.

**Mr Hayward:** It was summed up very well in the headlines of the *Australian* this morning, “Corrupt State in chaos”.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the honourable member for Caboolture for his timely interjection—“Corrupt State in chaos”.

Is it not fascinating that on day one of the Fitzgerald report, the Premier said, “We will implement it all. We will have a Cabinet meeting, before the Cabinet has read it, to determine that we are going to implement it all.”? Two days later a piece of Fitzgerald’s structure was in place, but that piece is going to be shifted away. I refer to that section of Fitzgerald’s report that has been quoted several times in the House tonight. I do not intend to requote it but I will refer to it. Fitzgerald spoke of the advantages of an independent Speaker.

Rather than implement any of the Fitzgerald report, which the Premier has lamentably said he will implement lock, stock and barrel—and I say “lamentably” not because I lament the fact that he has said it but because I lament the fact that he has said it while going in the other direction—today we are dismantling those bits of the Fitzgerald structure that are already in place.

The original allegation contained in the Tom Burns letter was that the Premier had misled the Parliament. That was the issue that was at stake. When the Speaker recommended that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee, he was referring it to the only appropriate body. However, in the sequel—in all that followed—the Premier demonstrated the truth of the original allegation. Again, during the course of his speech subsequent to Mr Powell’s standing-down, the Premier misled the Parliament.

The Premier went on to say that there was a conspiracy between Bjelke-Petersen, Lin Powell, the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. That claim is outrageous and absolutely extraordinary. It would not have been made by the Premier in circumstances other than when he was under a great deal of stress.

With the inevitability of hindsight, honourable members realise that the circumstances which unfolded could not have been otherwise. Tonight the former Speaker said that he did not consult with any member of Parliament; that he did not consult with members of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party. Indeed, if we are to take him at his word, he did not consult with members of the National Party. As far as I am aware, no member of the Opposition knew what was going on until the events actually started to unfold in the Parliament. I certainly did not know what was going on. At the time when the events were occurring, I was reading the final details of the Fitzgerald report.

**Mr Sherrin:** Methinks you protesteth too much.

**Mr Hayward:** Mr Sherrin is not even important, because he has got a safe seat.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank Mr Hayward for his as usual useful remarks.

Whether or not anybody else was consulted, it could have made no difference. The series of events was inevitable. At each stage there was nothing else that any of the players could have done in the circumstances of the ground rules that had been laid down for the game.

I remind honourable members that the Speaker had a letter. Because his principles prevented him from doing so, he could not deal with that letter himself. Even if his principles did not prevent him from doing so, sheer politics did. He could not go out into the wider community and say, "As Speaker I have sat as a judge in my own cause." He had no choice other than to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee.

Having received strict instructions from the Premier and the Leader of the House, the Government Whip refused to play his part. The Speaker could do nothing other than take the next motion. Opposition members could not allow the Speaker to go undefended. The next Premier had to move the motion. When that happened, in order to protect themselves the Premier and the Leader of the House had to call "Divide!" They had to use what is known in logicians' terminology as the *argumentum ad baculum* or the appeal to force. They had to use the sheer weight of numbers to protect the Premier from the investigation that he would have undergone before the Privileges Committee on the charge that he had misled Parliament. Given that that was so, and given that the division was called, the Speaker had no option other than to resign. The whole event has an aura of inevitability about it that makes the conspiracy allegations absolutely worthless and pointless. No-one could have done anything other than what was done. It would not have made any difference if people had been consulted, but they were not.

It is strange that the conspiracy allegation has been taken so seriously by Government members. It is totally fanciful. To suggest that people with as disparate ideologies as Bjelke-Petersen and Opposition members would engage in what has been described as a conspiracy—which is a very emotive term—is totally bizarre.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* gives a number of definitions of the word "conspiracy". Obviously we are looking for the pejorative definition. I advise honourable members that the definition contained in the *Macquarie Dictionary* is "a combination of persons for an evil or unlawful purpose". The Premier is suggesting that there was a combination of persons for an evil or unlawful purpose. What was that evil or unlawful purpose? Even if there had been a combination of persons—which there was not—acting in concert rather than people whose ends happened to coincide at a particular time, and even if there was this evil or unlawful purpose that the Premier would have us believe existed, which is the purpose of retaining the Speaker in the chair and supporting the Speaker's right to have the support of the House, that is no evil or unlawful purpose. To stand in defence of the Westminster system is no evil or unlawful purpose. There is nothing evil or unlawful about wishing that Lin Powell rather than Kev Lingard should occupy that chair. There is nothing evil or unlawful about wishing that the Westminster principle of the independence of the Speakership should be upheld. There is no evil or unlawful purpose involved in sustaining democracy. But this is the degree of fanciful allegation that is being received from honourable members opposite.

The Premier sees any concerted action to reinstate the former Speaker as evil or unlawful. The psychological concomitants of that are very serious. A term is used to describe people who see conspiracies here, there and everywhere. There is a phrase that aptly sums up the attitudes of those who are prepared to see conspiracies and who are prepared to describe the world as being out to get them. There is a phrase that sums up those who think that those who happen to disagree with them on a minor point are working together as enemies of all that is lawful and all that is opposed to evil. When it is applied to politicians, the phrase is political paranoia. It is the Reds-under-the-bed syndrome which I thought, when the Premier came to power, had gone, had vanished from the lexicon of this Parliament.

There is very little difference between alleging a conspiracy between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, Bjelke-Petersen, Lin Powell, Uncle Tom Cobley and Mickey Mouse and alleging that there are Reds under the bed. In the old days we used to be treated to allegations that the Liberal Party, the World Council of Churches and the Communist Party were all in league to get the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Do honourable members remember those days when we were told that the World Council of Churches was in league with communists and that the Liberal Party was amply seeded with communists? The same thing is occurring again—political paranoia. It is a hallmark of political paranoia that a person not only sees disparate groups in the community operating in concert against him but he even sees them all being part of one gigantic plot. When a person is politically paranoid, interrelationships between groups of people who have absolutely nothing to do with one another and who can scarcely give each other the time of day all form one vast agglomeration of co-operative interests designed to destroy him. I can only say that the strain of office must have been showing upon the Premier.

It is interesting to look at why that is so. While we are examining the psychological concomitants of what has led the Premier to this amazing outburst, we might as well look at what the cause might be. Mr Clerk and honourable members, it is with a due degree of modesty and humility that I advance this thesis, because it is a psychological thesis and I do not claim to be a psychologist. My wife, of course, is a psychologist and occasionally I have had the opportunity of reading one or two of the textbooks that she has brought home and I have picked up a little bit here and there. I would like to convey to honourable members a little bit about these matters. I am sure all honourable members will have heard of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex is a Freudian theory invented by Sigmund Freud, who said that children went through a certain stage during which they wanted to kill their father and marry their mother. We can forget about the marrying of the mother, because we do not talk about things like that in the Queensland Parliament, but let me talk about the killing of the father because it is all right to talk about violence. It comes from Oedipus, who was king of Thebes. For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that Thebes was a city state in ancient Greece. It was prophesied that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother. He did in fact kill his father, as a result of which, when he learned what he had done, he suffered tremendous and great remorse and a great deal of anxiety. This anxiety caused him a great deal of stress and this stress caused him a great deal of——

**Mr Sherrin:** Anxiety.

**Mr WELLS:** Indecision. I thank the honourable member for Mansfield for his useful interjection. It is interesting that when he had the opportunity of completing my sentence for me in a number of different ways, he completed it in a circle. That is typical of the honourable member's thought patterns.

The anxiety led to stress, the stress led to misjudgment and the misjudgment led to misgovernment. That is what has happened here. Obviously the Premier is in a situation similar to that of King Oedipus. I think he should not be too offended at being compared to a king. Just as King Oedipus killed his father, so did Mike Ahern kill Bjelke-Petersen. Was not Mike Ahern the golden-haired son, the golden-haired boy of the National Party? Was he not for years the heir apparent? Was he not for years standing waiting in the wings? Was he not for all those years the dutiful son, the dutiful heir and the dutiful apprentice? Did he not behave towards Bjelke-Petersen as a son behaves towards a tyrannical father? Was not Bjelke-Petersen like a cruel and tyrannical father who was prepared to lord it over him, to humiliate him, to force him to his knees, to say to him, "My son, you will grovel. My son, you will vote thus. My son, you will vote against all your principles. My son, you will learn how to become subservient to my every whim and desire."? Was that not a painful apprenticeship for the Premier?

I suggest that the Premier was suffering from this Oedipus complex when he slew his father, Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I use the term "slew" advisedly. I have not ever seen it, except in newspaper headlines. When he slew his father, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was he not liable to exactly the same psychological problems as King Oedipus when he slew

his father? Given that that is the case, it is not surprising that the Premier developed these stress symptoms. It is not surprising that the Premier departed so far from his normal agenda of honesty and plain speaking and began talking about conspiracies and reds under the beds. It is not surprising that in the wash-up——

**Mr Hamill:** Would you say that he is caught in mythology?

**Mr Comben:** You are giving us your diagnosis. What is the prognosis?

**Mr WELLS:** I will give the diagnosis first and I will come to the prognosis later.

**Mr Hayward:** Is Mr Ahern a private patient?

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the honourable member for Caboolture for asking whether he is a private patient because we know how the National Party likes to socialise its losses. I expect that any costs would be paid out of consolidated revenue, the same as the defamation writs were.

The honourable member for Ipswich, by his valuable contribution, interrupted my thought processes for a while. As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted by my colleagues, it is not surprising that the Premier suffered this stress because, after having gone through the experience of executing somebody who had been humiliating him for so many years, who had forced him to so much self-abnegation and who had forced him to make so many denials of the basic precepts upon which he would have liked to live his life, is it not likely that he would have suffered stress? Would he not after the event have tried to justify his act to himself and to the world? Would he not therefore try to represent the man whom he had executed as being the embodiment of all evil? Would he not, honourable members?

**Mr Comben:** Mr Wells——

**Mr WELLS:** Oh, not another interruption from the member from Windsor! Can he not keep his mouth shut?

**Mr Comben:** It is the 50th anniversary of Speaker Pollock's blowing his brains out. The Government has celebrated that by blowing the Speaker's brains out here in public.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the honourable member for Windsor for his valuable historical exegesis.

If the Premier had had to summon up sufficient emotional frenzy to execute his political father, would he not subsequently suffer stress and would he not subsequently try to rationalise it by some type of ex post facto justification such as, "He was in league with demons."? This is virtually what the Premier is saying. The man for whom he was a complaisant puppet for so many years, the man who pulled the strings, the man to whom he bowed and toadied, the man whose every precept he was prepared to follow in meticulous detail, is now, according to the Premier, some type of raging, dangerous socialist. Believe it or not, honourable members, that man is in league with members of the Labor Party! We are told that Bjelke-Petersen sits on the 23rd floor watching to see how his boys—referring to us, and leaving out Anne Warner—perform.

This degree of fanciful flight of whimsy is totally beyond what could reasonably be expected of the elder statesman that the Premier will become after the next election. We are told by the Premier that Bjelke-Petersen will get his revenge by having one of his proteges put in that chair. But have you thought it through, Mr Premier? Either way, whether you get Lingard up or Powell up, you have one of Bjelke-Petersen's proteges.

Although Kev Lingard was not the most spectacularly successful Minister—and I take nothing from him; perhaps it was due to the shortness of his reign—nevertheless, he was a Bjelke-Petersen protege. He was prepared to go down with the sinking Bjelke-Petersen ship. He was prepared to become a Minister in the last Bjelke-Petersen Government. He can sit in his place and smile. King Arthur was once referred to as the once and future king, and perhaps Kev Lingard can be referred to as the once and

perhaps future Speaker. He can sit in his place and smile with sentimental reminiscence of those days of power when for a few halcyon moments he lorded it over the world as the Minister for whatever he was Minister for.

**Mr Hamill:** Health.

**Mr WELLS:** It is not recorded by the history books that the nation's health improved as a result of his period in office.

Nevertheless, the point that I make is that as far as the Premier's conspiracy theory is concerned, his allegation that there is a plot to put a Bjelke-Petersen clone in the chair is absolutely absurd, because it is heads Ahern loses; tails Bjelke-Petersen wins. Either way there will be a Bjelke-Petersen protege in that chair and either way the Premier loses.

Who is involved in the conspiracy theory? Let us examine the logic of this theory. The Premier says that there is a conspiracy to put a Bjelke-Petersen protege in the chair, but who is running that conspiracy? The Premier is running that conspiracy, because the Premier has a conspiracy with National Party members to put Kev Lingard in the chair. Kev Lingard was a Bjelke-Petersen Minister and one of the few people who was prepared to go with the Bjelke-Petersen camp against the Ahern camp in the dying days of the Bjelke-Petersen Premiership. During the last days of Pompeii, Kev Lingard was prepared to sit on Vesuvius. Now Mike Ahern tells us that the other side has a plot.

**Mr Casey:** That's a lot of pumicestone bombarding you in the wrong place.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the honourable member for Mackay for his stony, but lightweight remark.

Ahern is Bjelke-Petersen's apprentice, and at election times when Bjelke-Petersen was seeking to represent himself as the semi-divine father of us all, there was Ahern, the golden-haired son and dutiful heir; the son who was prepared to go on to commit parricide. Now honourable members see Ahern engaging in this political paranoia of alleging conspiracies. The psychogenesis of this paranoia; this conspiracy theorising—the internal conflict of the Oedipal child, the desire to kill the father—leads to a progressive break-down of the capacity for rational thought about the parricidal deed. The ex post facto rationalisations involve the assumption that the murdered father is in conspiracy with every other group that stands in his way. This is bizarre stuff! It is as far out as anything that any rational Parliament has ever had to put up with from a respected leader of a majority party in any Parliament.

I wish to conclude by saying that for my part I hold nothing against Mr Kevin Lingard. He was one of the best National Party Ministers of all time; he certainly did the least damage. I will be casting my vote against him and will be voting for Lin Powell, because Lin Powell stands for the Westminster principle of the Speakership and Kev Lingard stands for control of the chair by the Premier's party. I will vote against Kev Lingard and for Lin Powell, not because I love Caesar less, but because I love Rome more.

**Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (2.49 a.m.):** After that most interesting discourse by my colleague the honourable member for Murrumba, it is appropriate that this evening this debate return to some less mythological allusions and to some of the real politic which is being played out in this House this evening.

How the worm turns! The man who was sacked from the Ministry by the former Premier, Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, is now proposing the man who was the last Bjelke-Petersen Speaker, and one of that dynamic team recruited to the last Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, to return to hold the Speakership of the House. It is a surprise to Opposition members that Mr Ahern wants Mr Lingard back as Speaker. Some members have expressed that it is a surprise, but I suggest that it is not. Dogs have been barking the story. If honourable members want to look at conspiracy theories, they have only to look at the situation that has prevailed with respect to Mr Powell and Mr Lingard.

A month ago the newspapers were barking of a conspiracy theory hatched in the National Party to remove Powell from the Speakership of the House and put Lingard in his place. If the Premier wants to leave fairyland he must forget about "Top Level Ted", the Joh Bjelke-Petersen conspiracy theory and the involvement of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party in this grand plan. To find evidence of the paranoia that was outlined by the honourable member for Murrumba, one only has to look at the conspiracy that has been hatched here today, and which no doubt was hatched by Ahern, the puppeteer Sparkes and the other puppet, Lingard, in an attempt to dislodge Powell as Speaker. They set up the plot to make sure that they had their man in the chair for the debate on the Fitzgerald report. It is a shameful and disgraceful act. It is a total disregard of all the recommendations to reform the Parliament that are contained in the Fitzgerald report.

Honourable members must look through this farce and through this shoddy dealing and make sure that one of the prime recommendations made by Fitzgerald is upheld; let us make sure that Lin Powell is returned as an independent Speaker for the Queensland Parliament.

At 2.52 a.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 Lingard . . . . .	42
Mr Powell . . . . .	40
Informal . . . . .	1

**Mr LINGARD** (Fassifern) (3.23 a.m.): I wish to thank the House for the honour that is about to be conferred upon me. I thank the honourable members for their comments during the debate. I wish to advise that, for those members who criticised me, I have spoken personally to them to explain to them why I believe that their comments are not correct.

I wish to congratulate the previous Speaker on the ability that he has shown in the House during his term. I believe that his ability in this House will never be questioned.

*Mr Lingard 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: I thank the House for the honour that has been conferred upon me.*

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (3.25 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I rise to offer a word of congratulation to you on your election to the high office of Speaker. I want to offer also my best wishes to your good wife, who has fulfilled her role very well in the past.

I express the good wishes of everybody. Today honourable members have taken part in a difficult debate. I know that all members of the House will want to join together to support the elected Speaker of the Parliament and to show him due respect. I do so accordingly. In doing that, I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members on this side of the House. I congratulate you very sincerely on your election to this high office.

The office of Speaker is a very high one and an important one to which I certainly give a great deal of respect. As the hour is late, I take the opportunity to sincerely congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on attaining this high office.

**Mr GOSS** (Logan—Leader of the Opposition) (3.27 a.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I wish to offer our congratulations on your election to the position of

Speaker. You have come to the office in possibly the most controversial and dramatic circumstances ever in this Parliament but certainly at least for a long time in the memory of most members.

During the course of my speech I voiced criticisms of your previous term as Speaker. Because of that previous experience, I must confess to some apprehension on the part of myself and many other members of the Opposition. However, having said that, let me say also that it is the Opposition's fervent wish that, during this forthcoming term as Speaker, we do have a much better relationship. Irrespective of how this forthcoming relationship compares with our assessment of the previous one, it is important that you are owed the support and the respect of the Opposition, and you will get it. I sincerely hope that the relationship will be a lot better and more satisfactory on both sides. I would assume—I think fairly—that in the same way as the Opposition had some misgivings about the relationship as it previously existed, you, Mr Speaker, did too.

It is important for this Parliament at any time—but it is especially important for this Parliament in this very difficult period of its own history and this very difficult period of Queensland's history—that we in this Parliament work together to make sure that it functions efficiently and in a responsible way in the very difficult task that lies ahead, particularly in relation to matters arising from the Fitzgerald inquiry. Of course, because this is also an election year, that task will be made even more tense and difficult. It will be a difficult task for you, Mr Speaker. However, in relation to the comments that I have made, I want to say sincerely that I believe that we in the Opposition can and should put the past behind us. I sincerely offer you our congratulations and support. As Leader of the Opposition I will be doing all in my power to work with you to make this Parliament work.

If I can make one other comment that I believe is appropriate in the circumstances—you have come to the Speakership by virtue of a vote that was very close. I must confess that it is of some concern and embarrassment, I am sure, to the Labor Party that two of its members were not present. I look forward with anticipation to their explanation.

It is nonetheless the case that, had those two members been here, the Labor Party's candidate would not necessarily have been successful. It would have at least been a draw. Sadly, I think, the difference in relation to your election as Speaker and the success of your candidacy is based on that curious arrangement that has been entered into between the National Party and a former member of the Labor Party. Unfortunately, it is reminiscent of the deal that the National Party did with two former Liberal members. That is a question that will plague this Parliament for a long time and will certainly plague this Premier in the same way as that previous shoddy, shabby deal plagued his predecessor.

Mr Speaker, whether you win by one vote, two votes or 100 votes, your position and you as the person who occupies that position are entitled to our support and respect, and you will have it. We trust and expect that that will be reciprocated. Congratulations.

**Mr INNES** (Sherwood—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.31 a.m.): Mr Speaker, the Liberal Party congratulates you on your election to this high office. We in the Liberal Party congratulate you on your election for a second time.

On the last occasion that there was an election for Speakership, I did say about your earlier term of office as Speaker that it was conducted with some fairness and dignity. We look forward to the same style. We also look forward to your preservation of the rights of all members of Parliament. We are all private members in this House. We are all equal, or should be equal, in the eyes of the Speaker. We are equal before the laws of this House, irrespective of what a particular member said today in another place quite improperly.

Your office does require courage and it also requires reciprocally the discipline of the House in supporting your rulings. The Liberal Party traditionally has supported the rulings of the Speaker, which includes not just those things you are entitled to do but, in your former avocation, even the right to be a little bit wrong. The referee has to be

respected. We will support you. We urge that those things said in the Fitzgerald report and those things said in the debate about the need for the independence of the House are maintained. We look forward to your maintaining the privileges of all members—we expect that you will—and to your showing fairness and impartiality, for which you have demonstrated a previous inclination. You are going to need it because at times the circumstances are difficult.

Some reference has been made to numbers. It is clear that there were numbers on the Government side which also had a contrary view. Today all sorts of references were made to motivations with regard to the conduct of the House. We in the Liberal Party certainly will judge the conduct on what takes place from the chair. That was the basis on which we made the assessment of the previous Speaker. That is the only basis on which we will make an assessment of you: how you conduct yourself in the chair. We look forward to supporting you. We look forward to your fairness and protection.

**Mr De LACY (Cairns)** (3.34 a.m.): Mr Speaker, during the debate for the election of Speaker, I was probably the most critical of your performance the last time that you were Speaker. I would like to place on record that I accept the vote of the House.

**Mr Ahern:** You didn't mean it.

**Mr De LACY:** No, I am not saying that.

I respect the institution of Speaker and I accept the vote of the House. I will respect your ruling and your position as the Speaker. I also made a number of allegations, which you and I have subsequently discussed. In view of the fact that you are now the Speaker, I am prepared to accept the explanation that you gave me. I think it is important that I place that on record before the House as you enter this term as Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I give a personal commitment that I will act as much as is humanly possible in an impartial way. I accept the role of the Opposition and the fact that the Opposition has a very important part to play in our Westminster system, and I, as Speaker, must ensure that the Opposition is allowed to play that part. I also must ensure that the Government is allowed to play its role. I give you that personal commitment that I will act as an impartial judge as much as possible.

#### PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER

**Hon. M. J. AHERN** (Landsborough—Premier and Treasurer and Minister for State Development and the Arts) (3.35 a.m.): 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 today at 9.15 a.m. o'clock. Cars will leave from outside the front entrance of the Parliamentary Annexe at 9 a.m. o'clock sharp.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. B. D. AUSTIN** (Nicklin—Leader of the House) (3.35 a.m.): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 a.m. on Thursday, 6 July 1989.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.35 a.m. (Thursday).