

QUEENSLAND



HANSARD

Legislative Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1998

TUESDAY, 28 JULY 1998

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 2 July 1998, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 10 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk read the Proclamation.

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT

The Clerk acquainted the House that His Excellency the Governor, not being able conveniently to be present in person this day, had been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued under the public seal of the State, appointing the Honourable Peter Douglas Beattie, the Honourable James Peter Elder and the Honourable Terence Michael Mackenroth, Commissioners in order to the opening and holding of this session of Parliament.

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

The SENIOR COMMISSIONER

(Honourable Peter Douglas Beattie—Brisbane Central): Honourable members, I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to let you know that as soon as the members of the Legislative Assembly have been sworn, the causes of this Parliament being called together will be declared to you: And it being necessary that a Speaker be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you proceed to the election of one of your number to be your Speaker, and that you present such person so chosen to His Excellency the Governor, at such time and place as His Excellency shall appoint.

I produce a Commission under the public seal of the State, authorising the Honourable Peter Douglas Beattie, the Honourable James Peter Elder and the Honourable Terence Michael Mackenroth or any one of them to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the oath or affirmation of allegiance to Her Majesty that is required by law to be taken or made and subscribed by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly.

The Clerk read the Commission.

RETURN OF WRITS

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

Albert: William Francis Baumann
 Archerfield: Karen Lee Struthers
 Ashgrove: Demetrios Fouras
 Aspley: John Nelson Goss
 Barambah: Dorothy Ruth Pratt
 Barron River: Lesley Ann Clark
 Beaudesert: Kevin Rowson Lingard
 Brisbane Central: Peter Douglas Beattie
 Broadwater: Allan Maxwell Grice
 Bulimba: Patrick Douglas Purcell
 Bundaberg: Junita Irene Cunningham
 Bundamba: Robert James Gibbs
 Burdekin: Jeffrey Alan Knuth
 Burleigh: Judith Margaret Gamin
 Burnett: Douglas John Slack
 Caboolture: William Patrick Feldman
 Cairns: Desley Boyle
 Callide: Jeffrey William Seeney
 Caloundra: Joan Mary Sheldon
 Capalaba: James Peter Elder
 Charters Towers: Robert Alan Mitchell
 Chatsworth: Terence Michael Mackenroth
 Chermside: Terence Boland Sullivan
 Clayfield: Santo Santoro
 Cleveland: Darryl James Briskey
 Cook: Stephen Dominic Bredhauer
 Crows Nest: Theo Russell Cooper
 Cunningham: Jannion Anthony Elliott
 Currumbin: Merri Rose
 Everton: Rodney Jon Welford
 Ferny Grove: Geoffrey James Wilson
 Fitzroy: James Pearce
 Gladstone: Elizabeth Anne Cunningham
 Greenslopes: Gary Bernard Fenlon
 Gregory: Vaughan Gregory Johnson
 Gympie: Leonard William Stephan
 Hervey Bay: David Bruce Dalgleish
 Hinchinbrook: Marcus Hosking Rowell
 Inala: Heinrich Palaszczuk
 Indooroopilly: Denver Edward Beanland
 Ipswich: David John Hamill
 Ipswich West: Jack Kelvin Paff
 Kallangur: Kenneth William Hayward
 Kedron: Paul Joseph Braddy
 Keppel: Vincent Patrick Lester
 Kurwongbah: Linda Denise Lavarch
 Lockyer: Peter Ross Prenzler
 Logan: Reginald John Mickel
 Lytton: Paul Thomas Lucas
 Mackay: Timothy Sean Mulherin
 Mansfield: Philip Gerard Reeves
 Maroochydore: Fiona Stuart Simpson
 Maryborough: John Alan Kingston
 Merrimac: Robert Joseph Quinn
 Mirani: George Edward Malone

Moggill: David John Hopetoun Watson
 Mooloolah: Bruce Edric Laming
 Mount Coot-tha: Wendy Marjorie Edmond
 Mount Gravatt: Judith Caroline Spence
 Mount Isa: Anthony McGrady
 Mount Ommaney: Julie Maree Attwood
 Mulgrave: Charles Robert Rappolt
 Mundingburra: Lindel Helena Nelson-Carr
 Murrumba: Dean MacMillan Wells
 Nerang: Raymond Thomas Connor
 Nicklin: Peter William Wellington
 Noosa: Bruce William Davidson
 Nudgee: Neil Stuart Roberts
 Redcliffe: Raymond Keith Hollis
 Redlands: John Joseph Hegarty
 Rockhampton: Robert Evan Schwarten
 Sandgate: Gordon Richard Nuttall
 South Brisbane: Anna Maria Bligh
 Southport: Michael Desmond Veivers
 Springwood: Grant Steven Musgrove
 Sunnybank: Stephen Robertson
 Surfers Paradise: Robert Edward Borbidge
 Tablelands: Shaun Christopher Nelson
 Thuringowa: Kenneth Turner
 Toowoomba North: Graham Healy
 Toowoomba South: Michael James Horan
 Townsville: Michael Francis Reynolds
 Warrego: Howard William Thomas Hobbs
 Warwick: Lawrence James Springborg
 Waterford: Thomas Alfred Barton
 Western Downs: Brian George Littleproud
 Whitsunday: Alfred Harold Black
 Woodridge: William Theodore D'Arcy
 Yeronga: Matthew Joseph Foley

MEMBERS SWORN

The Commissioners then administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance to the following members, who thereupon subscribed the roll—

ATTWOOD, Julie Maree
 BAUMANN, William Francis
 BEANLAND, Denver Edward
 BLACK, Alfred Harold
 BORBIDGE, Robert Edward
 BOYLE, Desley
 BRISKEY, Darryl James
 CLARK, Lesley Ann
 CONNOR, Raymond Thomas
 COOPER, Theo Russell
 CUNNINGHAM, Elizabeth Anne
 CUNNINGHAM, Junita Irene
 DALGLEISH, David Bruce
 D'ARCY, William Theodore
 DAVIDSON, Bruce William
 ELLIOTT, Jannion Anthony
 FELDMAN, William Patrick
 FENLON, Gary Bernard
 FOURAS, Demetrios

GAMIN, Judith Margaret
 GOSS, John Nelson
 GRICE, Allan Maxwell
 HAYWARD, Kenneth William
 HEALY, Graham
 HEGARTY, John Joseph
 HOBBS, Howard William Thomas
 HOLLIS, Raymond Keith
 HORAN, Michael James
 JOHNSON, Vaughan Gregory
 KINGSTON, John Alan
 KNUTH, Jeffrey Alan
 LAMING, Bruce Edric
 LAVARCH, Linda Denise
 LESTER, Vincent Patrick
 LINGARD, Kevin Rowson
 LITTLEPROUD, Brian George
 LUCAS, Paul Thomas
 MALONE, George Edward
 MICKEL, Reginald John
 MITCHELL, Robert Alan
 MULHERIN, Timothy Sean
 MUSGROVE, Grant Steven
 NELSON, Shaun Christopher
 NELSON-CARR, Lindel Helena
 NUTTALL, Gordon Richard
 PAFF, Jack Kelvin
 PEARCE, James
 PRATT, Dorothy Ruth
 PRENZLER, Peter Ross
 PURCELL, Patrick Douglas
 QUINN, Robert Joseph
 RAPPOLT, Charles Robert
 REEVES, Philip Gerard
 REYNOLDS, Michael Francis
 ROBERTS, Neil Stuart
 ROBERTSON, Stephen
 ROWELL, Marcus Hosking
 SANTORO, Santo
 SEENEY, Jeffrey William
 SHELDON, Joan Mary
 SIMPSON, Fiona Stuart
 SLACK, Douglas John
 SPRINGBORG, Lawrence James
 STEPHAN, Leonard William
 STRUTHERS, Karen Lee
 SULLIVAN, Terence Boland
 TURNER, Kenneth
 VEIVERS, Michael Desmond
 WATSON, David John Hopetoun
 WELLINGTON, Peter William
 WILSON, Geoffrey James

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Clerk having called upon the longest serving member, not being a Minister, to preside—

Mr J. A. Elliott (Cunningham) took the chair as the Presiding Member.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Honourable members, before calling for nominations for Speaker, I draw the attention of honourable members to the Standing Orders, which provide that any member present in the Chamber may be proposed as Speaker. Every proposal shall be seconded. Any member who has been proposed as Speaker is required to indicate if the proposal is acceptable. When all proposals have been made, seconded and accepted, debate may ensue. Debate shall be relevant to the question. Speeches shall not exceed five minutes' duration for each member. I remind honourable members and those in the gallery that, as Presiding Member, I have all the powers of the Speaker and I will not hesitate to use them if anyone transgresses. Members' speeches will be relevant to the question. If they are not, I will pull them up and if they continue to speak off the question, I will sit them down. I now call for nominations.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (10.40 a.m.): I move—

"That Raymond Keith Hollis do take the chair of this House as Speaker."

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (10.41 a.m.): I second that nomination.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Are there any further nominations?

Mr FELDMAN (Leader of the One Nation Party) (Caboolture—ONP) (10.41 a.m.): I move—

"That Shaun Christopher Nelson do take the chair of this House as Speaker."

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—ONP) (10.41 a.m.): I second that motion.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Are there any further nominations? I call the Premier.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (10.41 a.m.): I welcome all members to the Forty-ninth Parliament. It is my privilege and honour to nominate the member for Redcliffe as Speaker. Ray Hollis has the experience, temperament, determination and ability to fulfil the demanding duties of Speaker in the Forty-ninth Queensland Parliament. It will be a Parliament far more complex than any in recent decades because it comprises representatives of four political parties and two Independent members. It is up to the Speaker and all of us not only to make this Parliament work but also to make it effective and to restore the respect in it to which the public are entitled.

I am determined that my Government will play its part by setting high standards of honesty and accountability. The new Standing Orders that we will be putting forward will make the Government more accountable to Parliament. Ministers will not waste time in question time. Ministers will have three minutes to answer each question. Private members' Bills will actually be debated. In the past couple of years some members may have escaped being ejected from the Chamber for unparliamentary behaviour because it would have upset the very delicate numerical balance in the House. We can solve this problem by sending any unruly member to a parliamentary sin bin for a period of time. They will lose the ability to speak during debates but will be allowed to vote. This new power will be in addition to the existing Standing Order which allows a member to be excluded for both debating and voting.

The Speaker will face a difficult task. Queenslanders do not want this Parliament to resemble a bearpit. They want it to be the people's forum of positive ideas. They do not want proceedings to be little more than a childish squabble. They want it to be a debating Chamber where members work to improve Queenslanders' lifestyles. They do not want sittings to be used as an opportunity to make crude, unfounded allegations. They want a parliamentary Chamber that is treated with respect and dignity. All Queenslanders deserve a Parliament that they can respect, so all members will have to lift their standards. I say "all members" and I intend to lead by example.

We should all seek to ensure that when Queenslanders hear excerpts from a parliamentary debate on radio, when they see parliamentarians on the television news and when they read about Parliament in newspapers, they are impressed—not depressed. That is not to say that debate should not be robust. It does not mean that the Government should not be attacked when a member believes that it has got something wrong. There will be no attempt to stifle or neuter legitimate criticism. But the public expects logic, well-reasoned argument, facts and figures—not innuendo, smear and half-truths. I believe that the member for Redcliffe will display the authority, fairness and impartiality to guide this Parliament along those lines. It is also essential that the person who becomes Speaker should have the confidence of this House. I believe that the member for Redcliffe has the credentials to instil that confidence.

Raymond Keith Hollis was born in England 58 years ago, so he is someone who had the good sense to choose to live in Queensland. He was brought up in a depressed area of London by his mother, a single parent, from the age of two. Leaving school at the age of 15, he worked as a farmhand and then as a galley boy, cook and steward before settling in Australia at the age of 22. He then worked as a porter, guard and signalman, as a cook at Woomera Rocket Range, as a paper mill worker and prison officer and then ran his own carrying business for 13 years before entering Parliament. It was while working that he passed his higher school certificate and spent a year at La Trobe University studying behavioural science. He is married to Diane and has brought up four children.

Ray has always been deeply involved in community activities and was elected to this Parliament on 2 December 1989. Ray recognised in his own way some years ago that there was a danger that parliamentarians were distancing themselves from the average Queenslanders. His answer was to hold morning teas at his home. More than 1,600 constituents have been made welcome at his home. With nine years' parliamentary experience he knows the rules, regulations and traditions of this place and was chair of the Public Accounts Committee from 1992 to 1996. He is ideally suited to be the 31st Queensland Speaker. If Ray is successful in this vote, he would like to be remembered as the Speaker who restored dignity to the Parliament. I have faith that he will maintain a cool head in the hot seat.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: At this stage I would like to ask the member for Redcliffe and the member for Tablelands whether they accept their nomination.

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe—ALP) (10.46 a.m.): I accept the nomination.

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—ONP) (10.46 a.m.): I accept the nomination.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (10.46 a.m.): I am very pleased and honoured to second the nomination of the member for Redcliffe as Speaker of this House. There are two words that people who have had contact with the honourable member use when describing him. They say that he is straight and that he is honest. I believe that they are qualities that are needed in the position to which he has been nominated. The member

for Redcliffe is a man with a great deal of integrity.

As a local member of Parliament, he has shown himself to be responsive to the wishes of his constituents and as being able to think and act in a constructive manner. Yet, in much the same fashion as a local member cannot please every one of his constituents all of the time, I warn some members of this House that the Speaker of this House will not be able to please everyone in this House. It is very much a fact of life of a local member and of a Speaker that, from time to time, people are disappointed. Nonetheless, I am confident that the member for Redcliffe has the integrity and the grit that one needs to be Speaker in order to give confidence to the members in this House that he has control of this House.

I think all of us in this place recognise that the electorate at large—the total electorate, the broad electorate—is disenchanted. There is broad disenchantment about the manner in which this Parliament is conducted. Indeed, I recognise that some members opposite campaigned heavily on that issue and owe their election in part to the promise to raise standards in this House. I believe that some of the newer members in this House may be surprised at the workings of Parliament. They are considerably more than just question time, which is the section of parliamentary business on which the media focuses heavily and which is broadcast widely throughout the community both in the electronic media and in the newspapers. Question time tends to emphasise the dramatic clashes. I realise that that makes dramatic television, much of which does not go down too well in the broader community. What is not reported as widely is the vast amount of solid, unspectacular work that is carried on in this place for which there is little recognition. The business of this House is not only in narrow, verbal jousting—although it is part of this House—but also in finding real solutions to the real problems that face us.

There is a lot of work that is not headline grabbing, that is not spectacular. It involves presenting a point of view and listening to others' points of view and adapting and accommodating so that a broad consensus can be reached. It is difficult work, but it is mostly what is done in this place. That is mostly how this place operates. I accept the view that we all need to present to the public a willingness to listen and to approach our business in the same fashion in which our business is conducted outside this place. It behoves all 89 members to act in a fashion that would make the citizens of this State proud of us as an Assembly. It is incumbent

not just on the members of this House but also on those who reflect on it to portray more of the real nature of the proceedings and less of the temperamental conduct and drama.

However, I sincerely hope that we do not become too concerned with form rather than substance in our dealings in this place. This is a robust place and it has been that way since its inception. Anyone who thinks that Queensland Parliaments of a century ago were paragons of cool reason and politeness have little sense of history. This has always been a place where people put forward views and ideas in a passionate fashion. It is a history that I am personally not ashamed of, and I do not think that anyone in this Assembly should be ashamed of it. From time to time there will be rigorous debate and I do not think that we should shrink from that in the slightest.

When I disagree with members on the other side of the House, I will be saying so, and I will be saying so in a firm and vigorous manner. We on this side of the House have views different in many areas from those on the other side of the House. I expect debate in this House to reflect that. I think that we would be letting down the people whom we represent, the people who voted for us, if we did not reflect those differences. That is what this place is all about: it is all about creative resolution of those differences.

I accept that, if his nomination is successful, the member for Redcliffe will have a firm hand over debate in this place and will direct it for the betterment of this State. Having known the member and worked with the member since we were both elected in 1989, I will not go through what the Premier has outlined in terms of Ray's history, but I must say that I am very pleased to be able to stand in this House and second the nomination for the member for Redcliffe as Speaker of this Parliament.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.51 a.m.): The Opposition has given this particular matter a great deal of consideration in recent days, since the announcement by the Government that the honourable member for Redcliffe would be nominated for the very important senior position as Speaker of the House and as champion of the individual members of this House. I do not think that any of us should underestimate the role or significance of the office of Speaker. We have come to the view that, on this occasion, the Opposition will not be proposing a candidate for the office of Speaker and we will not be

opposing the election of the honourable member for Redcliffe as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

There are a number of reasons for that—I guess some of them pragmatic. Out of respect to the member for Redcliffe, I think that it is also fair to say, firstly, that he does show and he has shown a demonstration of the principles of parliamentary democracy. He has shown a commitment to this place and to the institution of Parliament, and that is important. Having said that and being a little more pragmatic, I must say that in a House so evenly divided it would be a foolish Opposition that offered one of its own to strengthen the numbers of the Government in terms of the Government's intention to try to run the Parliament. I was not of the view that we should be giving the Leader of the House and others the opportunity to put in place a Speaker from the non-Government side of the House which would, of course, strengthen the Government's hand in all that it will be seeking to do in what is a finely divided and evenly divided Parliament.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the previous Speaker, the Honourable Neil Turner. I have been in this place since 1980 and I have seen a great many Speakers serve. No doubt, all of them have served to the best of their ability. However, I have not seen a Speaker placed in as difficult a position as the former member for Nicklin in keeping the balance between Government and Opposition and also the needs of the Independent member for Gladstone in that previous Parliament. He brought to the job good humour, good judgment and an ability to be able to maintain a close dialogue with members on both sides of the House. Of course, quite aside from what he achieved inside the Chamber, he also presided over substantial improvements to the parliamentary precinct, which now increasingly all members of Parliament and those people who come to this place are able to enjoy. So I pay tribute to the Honourable Neil Turner, the former Speaker. I believe that he will go down in history as one of the finest, if not the finest, Speaker that has served this Parliament. I know that the honourable member for Redcliffe, should he be successful today and I would expect him to be so, has some big shoes to fill in what will be an even more difficult Parliament to manage and to manage properly.

I was going to save this for another day but, seeing the Premier raised it, I just say that there is nothing quite like a born-again

parliamentarian. I am fascinated by the new-found commitment to high standards of parliamentary debate by the former members of the Opposition who are now the new Government. I look forward to seeing that unfold; I really do. It is going to be fascinating. No more dummies, I presume, Mr Premier! I know that the Premier is walking a fine line in all of this and I think that the Deputy Premier, who in many respects is much more a creature of the hard debate in this place, tried to put a bit of balance into what the Premier was saying, and that is that this is inevitably a place of conflict. We all have a responsibility to make sure that adequate standards are respected in the Parliament but, for heaven's sake, please do not stifle the Parliament. This is a robust democracy. There have been errors of judgment made on both sides. If this Parliament is to work, it must be robust.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.56 a.m.): As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, we have not proposed a nomination from the Opposition for the position of Speaker. At this stage I wish the member for Redcliffe all the luck that he has actually counted the numbers right. As the Leader of the Opposition has done, I would like to take this opportunity to express a few words, first of all, about the previous Speaker and also give some indication of what we expect from the new Speaker. I for one will miss Neil Turner. I will miss his firm hand, I will miss his fair hand and I am going to miss his wit. Neil Turner served this Parliament with distinction, presiding over the most finely balanced Parliament in the history of this State. I think that the fact that he needed to eject just one member in his term of Speaker speaks volumes.

Mr Foley interjected.

Dr WATSON: I am going to get to the Minister. I think that speaks volumes about the control that Neil Turner had over the House. As I remember that fateful day, when the now Attorney-General was ejected, I think that everybody on both sides of the House gave a sigh of relief.

Neil Turner was a big hit with visiting dignitaries. As members know, he used to keep a two-metre bull whip hanging behind the door of his office. He was often given to giving demonstrations of this for visitors. On one occasion when there was a visiting Chinese delegation he actually used the whip to cut a cigarette from the visiting dignitary's mouth. I think Neil said something like, "If I had missed, that would have been the end of Australian-Chinese relations." As I said, Neil

Turner will be greatly missed as a Speaker and we wish him and Ute all the best for the future.

In Opposition, all we are asking from the new Speaker is a fair crack of the whip. I certainly hope that we never have cause to move a vote of no confidence in the new Speaker. During my time in Federal Parliament, I was actually part of such a vote. I remember what happened that day quite clearly. I think the new member for Logan, Mr Mickel, might remember. It was moved by the then Leader of the National Party, Ian Sinclair, against the Deputy Speaker, Leo McLeay. I think what he said in the debate on that fateful day in September has relevance here today. The motion of no confidence came about after the Deputy Speaker threw the then Opposition Leader, John Howard, out of the Chamber. That was the first time an Opposition Leader had been ejected from the House since Robert Menzies in 1949. John Howard was ejected because he refused to withdraw a remark. At the time the remark seemed quite innocuous. It was said that he accused Paul Keating of telling a parliamentary lie, something that Paul Keating had said about John Howard not much earlier.

What impressed me that day was not so much that episode as the off-the-cuff speeches given by Ian Sinclair, Neil Brown from the Opposition and, to be truthful, Mick Young, who was then Leader of the House. If people want to see a great set of speeches given off the cuff, they should go back to the Hansard of that particular day and see what Ian Sinclair, Neil Brown and Mick Young had to say. I was there, so I remember it in detail. I think it is important for the new Speaker of the House to note what Ian Sinclair said to Leo McLeay. He said:

"You are entrusted with the custody of this chamber and you are expected to behave in a manner in which you do not curry favour with those with whom you might have a political association. The behaviour of the speaker is quite fundamental to the maintenance of the stature of this parliament."

He went on to say—

"You are supposed to exercise appropriate dispassionate judgment."

I trust that the member for Redcliffe, if elected, will exercise appropriate dispassionate judgment or, in other words, along Neil Turner's line, that he will give us a fair crack of the whip.

Mr FELDMAN (Leader of the One Nation Party) (Caboolture—ONP) (11.01 a.m.): I

commend the Premier on his high ideals, but I concur with the cynicism of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to exactly how this Parliament will operate. The office of Speaker is a noble one which must be administered very carefully. We know and we have seen how this House has operated in the past. I have heard it described here today as "robust"; I have heard it described outside as appalling.

I hear those in this House speak of experience and of the experience of the office of Speaker. I did not expect to hear ageism in this Parliament. I have heard it said that youth carries with it inexperience, but I put to honourable members that youth carries with it no prejudice and no preconceived notions and it knows how to follow rules. At the end of the day, that is what this Parliament is about; it is about following the rules.

I speak now of my friend from the tablelands, Shaun Christopher Nelson. He was born here in Brisbane. He went to school here. He is a Queenslander through and through. He is the son of a police officer. He learnt in his home to follow rules. He joined the Army and he spent five years there doing the very same thing. He has served his country with honour and pride, and he intends to do the same thing here in this House if honourable members give him the opportunity to serve as Speaker.

I do not intend to tarry long, for this Parliament is not about too much talk; it is about doing something. Today we have given this Parliament its first choice. That is democracy.

Mrs PRATT (Deputy Leader of the One Nation Party) (Barambah—ONP) (11.03 a.m.): I offer to Queensland what a quarter of its population wants, that is, choice. I support our nomination.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: A ballot will now be conducted. I draw the attention of all honourable members to the form of the ballot paper which will be used. It will list only the names of those members who have been nominated and seconded and who have accepted the nomination. Members are required to place a cross in the square immediately to the left of the name of the member they choose to be the Speaker. As their names are called, members will come forward to receive their ballot paper. After voting, members will place their folded ballot paper in the ballot box on the table. The Clerk will now proceed to call the members.

The CLERK: Mr Hollis and Mr Nelson have been nominated and seconded for the

office of Speaker. A ballot will now be held in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 6 and 7.

At 11.51 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 Hollis	76
Mr Nelson	12
Informal	1

Mr Hollis submitted himself to the pleasure of the House and, on being called, was conducted to the chair by the mover and the seconder.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is indeed a great honour to be elected by my fellow parliamentarians to the office of Speaker. I thank this Parliament for electing me to this high office and I take this opportunity to thank those members who proposed and seconded me for this position and for the kind words expressed by members in relation to my selection as Speaker, particularly those by the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

You can be sure that I have big shoes to fill. Neil Turner as the Speaker in this place is a hard act to follow. I hope that I emulate what he did during the time that he was in this chair by showing the same fairness to all sides of Parliament and being as impartial as he was.

When first elected as a member of the Forty-sixth Parliament in 1989, I spent much of my time in this chair as a Temporary Chairman. It was a great learning experience and it gave me excellent preparation for the task ahead of me in this the Forty-ninth Parliament. During the years that I have been a member of this Assembly, I have escorted many groups from my electorate through the hallowed hallways of this place. It has been with immense pride that I have extolled its time-honoured traditions to my constituents and expressed the honour of being a member of this fine establishment.

As Speaker, I ask that all members be fully aware of the high-profile role of a member of Parliament. The eyes of Australia will be focused on this Parliament, and if we are to restore public faith in the parliamentary process it is important that we strive to maintain a standard of dignity and statesmanship. Your cooperation in these matters will be of the utmost importance.

To the 25 new members of this Parliament, welcome. You can always be assured that the Speaker's door will be open to you at any time. Thank you again for the

honour and the privilege conferred upon me today.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (11.55 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Government I congratulate you on the high office that you have achieved and wish you well in the work that you will have to perform over the next three years. Can I say that I support the comments that you made before in relation to lifting the standards of this House. I pledge to you today the support of the Government for lifting the standards of Parliament. While I note that there was some concern and some cynicism expressed a little earlier about lifting the standards of this House, can I say to all members that it is a matter of leadership and it is a matter for all of us to behave in a better way. I know that some of you will say that it has been a little bit like Saul on the way to Damascus—that we have seen the light. Well, let it be that we have seen the light. It comes down to every leader in this Parliament doing their bit to lift the standards. I am not going to allow a little bit of cynicism to stand in the way of improving the performance of this Parliament and winning back the respect of the community. Mr Speaker, I wish you well.

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.56 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Opposition in this place, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to this most important role. To say that it will not be an immense challenge would be to underestimate the enormity of the task. This is probably the most difficult Parliament that any Speaker has had to deal with, and deal with fairly and deal with dispassionately. We wish you well in regard to those endeavours.

Mr Speaker, can I also assure you that the Opposition will play its role in terms of the dignity of this place. I say to my successor that we will not be stifled from doing the legitimate job of an Opposition in inquiring, in debating and in making sure that this Parliament does not become a mausoleum. The basic fabric of a democratic society is that members have the right to question, to inquire and to debate. Mr Speaker, I know that in your time here you have always respected the rights of members on both sides of the House to do that. Ultimately, all of us as participants in the parliamentary process should not be intimidated away from raising issues that we believe should be raised here because if those issues cannot be raised in this Parliament they

cannot be raised anywhere. Clearly, then, the Government of the day escapes the accountability and the scrutiny that a proper and well-functioning Parliament imposes on it.

I suspect that some of the comments that we have heard from the Premier in regard to his new-won commitment to upgrade parliamentary standards in this place have more than a little bit to do with intimidating non-Government members in this place to prevent them from raising issues that they feel they have a responsibility to raise. I make the point that we will raise these issues; we will be a responsible Opposition. At the same time, no Opposition worth its salt is worth anything in the community if it runs dead, if it cowers, if it responds to criticism that it should not be raising issues. That is the legitimate role of an Opposition in the parliamentary democracy that members on both sides of this House should cherish.

Mr Speaker, I am heartened by the comments that you have made today. We look forward to working with you. We will be

responsible, we will respect traditions and the role and the dignity of the office of Speaker. Mr Speaker, I wish you well in your judgments and your deliberations in this most fascinating of Parliaments of which we are all now a part.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (11.59 a.m.): The Governor will be pleased to receive members for the purpose of presenting the Speaker to His Excellency at Government House tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 minutes after 2 o'clock p.m. tomorrow in the late Legislative Council Chamber."

Motion agreed to.

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (12 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12 p.m.