



Speech by

BRUCE DAVIDSON

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard 19 November 1998

PRIVILEGE

Queensland Small Business Council

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa—LP) (9.31 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. On 12 November 1998, I rose on a matter of privilege pertaining to the misleading of this House by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development on the issue of the Small Business Council. The misleading statement came in a response to an earlier question asked on 11 November 1998 by the member for Toowoomba South, in which the Minister stated—

"I have written to the members asking them to again indicate their interest in serving on the Small Business Council. Although I have not received too many as yet, I am expecting responses to that invitation."

In my initial matter of privilege I advised this House that I had taken the opportunity of telephoning council members and subsequently discovered that not one of those members had received any correspondence from the Minister. Later in the same morning, the Honourable Minister rose on a matter of privilege suddenly arising and tabled a memorandum dated 30 October 1998 from his policy adviser addressed to the Minister and a signed but undated letter from his ministerial office to the Chairman of the Small Business Council, Mr Murphy. The Minister asserted that he had signed the letter during the course of the previous week, that being the week from 2 to 6 November 1998, and had sent the signed letter back to his Ministerial Correspondence Unit.

On 13 November, I was advised by members of the council that they had, in fact, only just received their undated letters in the mail on that day—13 November 1998. For the benefit of honourable members of this House, I repeat: they had, in fact, only just received their undated letters that very day. That being the case, it leads me to ask how the Minister was in a position on 11 November 1998 to have received any responses to the invitation as stated in his response to the question from the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr Speaker, it is my strong belief that the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development has deliberately misled this House. I again ask you to refer this matter with this further information to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.
