



Speech by

**Dr DAVID WATSON**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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Hansard 28 July 1998

#### **ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

**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.

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