



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 16 September 1998

**PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (3.40 p.m.): I rise in relation to the Public Service Amendment Bill because it concerns another broken Labor promise. This legislation is about keeping Labor honest. It is about accountability for taxpayers' dollars. The Premier says that he has a mandate for five-year contracts. That is a complete load of nonsense and it is dishonest and untrue to say such a thing.

For the information of honourable members I table a copy of an article entitled "Leaders' messages for PS" contained in the June 1998 edition of Sector Wide, the Queensland public sector employees' magazine. The article sets out clearly the Labor Party's position in relation to the Public Service. When it suits him, the Premier has a conveniently short memory. This article states—

"I am committed to job stability for all Public Servants, other than those such as Directors-General on short-term contracts which expire with the Government of the day."

This article makes clear what the then Leader of the Opposition was on about. This is a message to all public servants in Queensland. It is not hidden away in some secret Labor Party policy document. This is a document that went out to the public servants of Queensland in June 1998. It is no good the Premier saying, "I sent out some policy document some time earlier than that to the public servants of this State. I released that message in April 1997." The message that went out to the public servants of Queensland was that which is contained in this magazine. It is there in black and white. That is what public servants read and that is what they pointed out to me. The Premier is being dishonest. I will repeat what the article says because it is worth while hearing again—

"I am committed to job stability for all Public Servants, other than those such as Directors-General on short-term contracts which expire with the Government of the day."

Nothing can be more straightforward than that statement. It is a public document. Why was the Premier not prepared to come out and tell the public what he was really thinking?

**Mr Beattie:** We did.

**Mr BEANLAND:** You did not. You misled them. You were untrue. In the Public Service document—

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. The words used by the member are untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Reeves): Order! What words are you referring to?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I find those allegations that I was untrue to be untrue.

**Mr BEANLAND:** According to the Deputy Speaker you are supposed to tell me the exact words.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The word "untrue".

**Mr BEANLAND:** I withdraw the word "untrue" and say that he misled the public servants of Queensland. I have already tabled the article contained in the magazine of June 1998. I did not write this article, but certainly someone called Peter Beattie—whoever he might be—wrote it. I believe he

may have been Leader of the Opposition and he wrote the article that appeared in the Sector Wide magazine. That is what the public servants believed and that is what they went to the polls on.

We can go back a little further. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Toowoomba South, have pointed out that in September 1996 Mr Beattie was on record as saying this in the Sector Wide magazine—

"The decision of the Borbidge Government to make CEO contracts only 'for the term of government' is welcome."

The article goes on to say—

"... such appointees should leave office immediately upon a change of government—and without a big payout from long-suffering taxpayers."

We have the Premier twice making these statements. We have it in September 1996 and it also appears in the Sector Wide magazine in June 1998. This is the election issue. We find it in this magazine that is put out for public servants. That is exactly what the Premier told the public servants of Queensland. Let the truth be shown. The Labor Party's mandate concerns what is contained in the Sector Wide magazine, and nothing else. Today we have heard nothing but hypocrisy and double standards. The Premier has talked about style and various other things. The style of this Government is deceit. The Premier is involved in deceiving the State's public servants. During the debate the Premier became so desperate that he started referring to Queensland places as being weird and wonderful. In opposing this legislation the Government is coming up with arguments purely in an endeavour to get the member for Nicklin on side. The Government's survival depends upon the member for Nicklin's support. That is what this is all about.

**Mr Beattie:** I have just read this. You can't even read this properly.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is quite clear—

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. I have just taken the trouble to read this. What I was referring to was what the former Government did. The member is being grossly dishonest.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Reeves): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will repeat it for the benefit of the Premier. The Premier is the dishonest person. He has been caught out telling the people an untruth.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. That is not true. This article clearly refers to what the then Government was doing whilst in office, not my policies. What the member said is untrue and I ask that it be withdrawn. The member is exposed because he cannot read English.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will withdraw whatever the Premier wants me to withdraw, but I will read this out again because it is quite clear.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. Read the whole context of the article. It refers to your contracts, not my policies. Read the whole document, not selective parts.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Premier is squirming. Let us go back to what this document says. The Premier can squirm, wriggle and weasel as much as he likes. This is his document, not that of the Leader of the Opposition. On the same page of this article Mr Borbidge puts his position. I will repeat what Mr Beattie said.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Reeves): Order! The member will refer to other members by their correct title.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is just that the Premier occupies several positions in this particular matter. When the Premier was Leader of the Opposition—

**Mr Borbidge:** Which is different to his position now.

**Mr BEANLAND:** That is quite so. This article appears under the Premier's name. He said—

"I am committed to job stability for all Public Servants, other than those such as Directors-General on short-term contracts which expire with the Government of the day."

It cannot be much clearer than that. It is straightforward. It is in line with what the Premier believed at that time.

**Mr Borbidge:** Not the Borbidge Government.

**Mr BEANLAND:** No, not the Borbidge Government; it does not say that. It is exactly in line with what the Premier said in the September 1996 edition of Sector Wide. I can understand the Premier's concern because it worked all right for a while but the Government has now been caught out. This Government has taken a politically motivated position in relation to this legislation. When the Opposition endeavours to keep the Government honest the Government resorts to all sorts of exercises in order to stop the truth from coming out.

The Government has no mandate for five-year contracts. The Premier might not like that, but it is true. In fact, if one is going to talk about his mandate—he received only 38% of the vote. So he has no mandate for any legislation whatsoever. The situation is that he went to the people of Queensland saying that he supports short-term contracts which expire with the Government of the day. That is what he has a mandate for, if he has a mandate for anything in this place, not for anything else. The sooner the Premier faces up to that, the better off public servants will be. They know what the Premier's views are on this matter.

This is a disgraceful situation. The Government has now failed to honour its election commitment on this issue. This Bill from the Leader of the Opposition endeavours to get the Government to honour its election commitment. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, released a press statement prior to the now Premier making the appointments of the current range of senior public servants. In that statement, Mr Borbidge made it perfectly clear that he would be introducing a private member's Bill to this effect. His statement, which was released in early August, explained that he would be introducing a private member's Bill to spell it out clearly. He put on notice the Government and those directors-general who were signing up.

**Mr Borbidge:** Before they had the confidence of the House. They shouldn't have been signing contracts before they had the confidence of the House.

**Mr BEANLAND:** That is exactly right. They were put on notice. Before the Government got the confidence of the House, it was signing those public servants' contracts. In these circumstances, the Government was given very clear notice. The Premier cries foul, but he and those public servants who were being signed up for those contracts knew exactly what the situation was. It was spelt out well beforehand by the Leader of the Opposition. So there is nothing new in this at all. We have seen a bit of play-acting and a theatrical performance from the Premier, which he is good at. But that is not the truth of the situation. This is just an opportunistic moment for the Premier to try to make a point in relation to this matter.

It is worth while keeping in mind that this Bill is all about restoring some stability to the Public Service, which has been destroyed by this minority Labor Government. When the former National/Liberal coalition Borbidge/Sheldon Government came to office, there was a great deal of instability within the Public Service. The Public Service was in disarray, but stability was restored. Large numbers of public servants were in acting positions for years on end. That was very debilitating for the people in those positions. Some units of the Public Service did not even know whether they were going to exist from one day to the next because there was so much instability within the Public Service generally because people were not appointed to permanent positions.

When the Goss Government came to office in 1989, there was a bloodbath. Now, with the coming to office of the Beattie minority Labor Government, we have seen another bloodbath and another purge of public servants. Career public servants of 35 years' standing have been given the sack. Those people included the deputy director-general of a department. Then a parliamentary draftsman, a public trustee and then a director-general of a department were given the sack.

**Mr Borbidge:** They couldn't even apply for their jobs, because their jobs were filled by Labor mates.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I was just coming to that. Those people could not reapply for their jobs because they were not advertised. We then heard the weak argument from the Premier that they were advertised a long time ago and that, because those people occupied a position some time prior to this, on merit, they could have those positions yet again. What a fallacious argument that is. We will remember that argument in the future, when the Premier tries some more of these silly proposals that have no credibility whatsoever. But that is the sort of silly nonsense one expects from day to day from this Government and this Premier. Those people were loyal public servants to this State, not to any particular party or Government. Those good, loyal public servants did not even have an opportunity to reapply for their jobs, because that was denied them by this Labor Government. So much for the merit system! What a farce it is.

The amendments put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in this Bill endeavour to ensure that there is accountability on the part of the Government and the Public Service generally and, importantly, so that the taxpayers are not faced with huge payouts, as occurred in the past. The member for Toowoomba South mentioned a five-year contract that was signed the day before the Mundingburra by-election.

**Mr Borbidge:** Ross Rolfe.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Mr Rolfe, was it?

**Mr Borbidge:** Guess who's back.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I am sure that Mr Rolfe is back—no doubt under a merit system in some department. There is no doubt that he did not have to go through the advertising process.

**Mr Borbidge:** I wonder whether he paid back any of his payout.

**Mr BEANLAND:** That is another issue: whether he paid that back. I challenge the Premier—since he is so good at this—to read his own statement, because it is there in black and white. He has misled the public of Queensland in relation to this matter——

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker——

**Mr BEANLAND:**—and no amount of taking points of order——

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Reeves): Order! The Premier has risen on a point of order.

**Mr BEATTIE:** This document says that I guarantee people security in their positions other than those whose contracts would expire under members opposite. That is exactly what it says. I ask for the comment that I misled the House to be withdrawn. I find it offensive.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has sought a withdrawal.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Mr Deputy Speaker, that is not what the document says. The Premier is misleading the House. I will read to the House what it says.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. The member is trying to bring the House into disrepute. I have asked for the comment to be withdrawn. Under Standing Orders, I am entitled to that withdrawal.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. What the Premier says he said is not what he said in the article. The member for Indooroopilly has stated what the Premier said in the article.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It is too late now to rewrite it——

**Mr BEATTIE:** The Leader of the Opposition is abusing his privilege in this House.

**Mr BORBIDGE:**—when he has been caught out telling untruths.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! What were the words that offended the Premier?

**Mr BEATTIE:** That I misled the people of Queensland. The document is very clear. I am referring to the fact that I would not be extending their contracts.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Mr Deputy Speaker, that is not a point of order; it is a debating point.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has asked for those words to be withdrawn.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I withdraw those words, but I will read this section into Hansard for the edification of the Parliament. It states——

"I am committed to job stability for all Public Servants, other than those such as Directors-General on short-term contracts which expire with the Government of the day."

**Mr Borbidge:** Not the Borbidge Government.

**Mr BEANLAND:** There is no mention of any other Government.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. In other words, I was not going to renew the contracts of those people.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It says "with the Government of the day". That is quite clear.

**Mr Borbidge:** Not the Borbidge Government.

**Mr BEANLAND:** There is no mention of the Borbidge Government. I will make a copy available to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, as well as to Hansard.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members who wish to interject should do so from their correct seats.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It must be a problem that the Premier has: he writes these statements, puts them in Sector Wide—the Queensland public sector employees magazine—then comes into this Chamber and tries to deny words that are in that magazine. The magazine speaks for itself. The Government is not putting into place contracts which will expire at the end of the term of this Government; they clearly are fixed-term contracts for five years.

The term of this Government could end in two or three days' time or in six months' time. It may not last as long as the former Borbidge/Sheldon Government did. Who knows? It may serve its full term. But those are matters for the future. The fact is that this commitment in Sector Wide magazine has not been honoured. That is the point that I am making today. It is important to keep in mind that this magazine went out to the public of Queensland and the public servants of this great and vast State of ours. This Parliament needs to be made aware of what this Labor Government's election commitment was to the public servants of this State.

