



Speech by

Hon. J. ELDER

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Hansard 28 July 1998

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

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.
