



Speech by

**Hon. J. ELDER**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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Hansard 16 September 1998

**MR SPEAKER'S RULING**

**Motion of Dissent**

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Minister for Trade) (8.50 p.m.): I rise to speak against the motion. What we are seeing tonight in this place is what people see as the worst of Parliament—what they think out there in the community about the political process: cheap point scoring, debated at some length, with little outcome at the end of the day. Shakespeare put it best: plenty of sound and fury, signifying nothing. At the end of the day, the public will not be any wiser, there will not be one more job created in Queensland, and the dignity of this place will not be enhanced, but nobody will be any the wiser.

The simple fact is—and it has just been articulated clearly by the Premier—that even under the Standing Orders, the Speaker's ruling to which the Leader of the Opposition has raised an objection was patently correct. The Speaker was correct in his interpretation of the Standing Orders and the way in which he ruled. The efforts by the member for Surfers Paradise to climb on that high moral pedestal are simply transparent. We saw this for years when he sat in Opposition on that side of the House. The member for Surfers Paradise is very transparent.

When the Premier made his comment about the member for Surfers Paradise, the member protested. But as the Premier has just outlined, he clearly was talking about the Opposition. He clearly meant the people who were out there attacking the people who were running the inquiry into child abuse. That is what he was referring to. The Leader of the Opposition was jeopardising that inquiry, and the Premier pointed that out. He was attacking the people who were actually doing the inquiry and, therefore, jeopardising the inquiry. At the end of the day, this gave some comfort to those who sought to have nothing exposed by that inquiry. That is what the Leader of the Opposition was doing, and that is how the Premier put it to the House. One has only to read the Hansard record of what was said to realise that it is quite clear what the Premier meant.

I stand right by the Premier and right by the Speaker's interpretation. The Premier meant that, by attacking those people, the Leader of the Opposition was jeopardising and undermining the inquiry, which is what he set out to do on that particular day in the Parliament. This is merely a bit of transparent tap dancing in this Parliament by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise. Time and time again he has been transparent. At the end of the day, he was out to get a good run in the media, and he went to some effort to get it. The practical effect is patently clear. What the Premier outlined on that day was quite simple: by attacking the inquiry and the composition of the inquiry, the Leader of the Opposition gave comfort to those whom the inquiry seeks to expose. That is what it was about. He gave comfort to those people, and the Premier outlined that. And that hurt the Leader of the Opposition, because his plan was exposed. It hurt because, finally, apart from getting his run in the media, it put him on the back foot because it was true. He was out there undermining the inquiry.

The Leader of the Opposition should stop being such a giant sensitive plant. He should do some decent work in the Parliament. The Premier was patently not accusing the Leader of the Opposition of some sort of impropriety or activity. He was not accusing the Leader of the Opposition personally of indulging in any of the sorts of activities into which the inquiry was looking, so he should not be such a giant sensitive plant. Or in this new age, I suppose that I should call him a medium-sized sensitive person and get it politically correct, because the member always tries to get things politically correct. Obviously, the Premier was not calling the Leader of the Opposition a child molester. The



Leader of the Opposition is much like the schoolkids with whom I grew up at Inala. He is just telling tales. It was a good day for telling tales in the Parliament and getting the run in the media that he wanted.

Members on this side of the House strongly support the Speaker's ruling because it is right. I am worried about whether or not we are going to see more of this sort of thing. Is this going to be a continuous roadshow? I have to say that members on this side of the House had far more respect for Speaker Turner than members opposite have shown already for Speaker Hollis. Again, our position in Opposition was clearly outlined by the Premier. We strongly support the Speaker's ruling. This debate will not enhance the dignity of this place one iota. As I said, it will not create one more job in this State, it will not resolve any of the problems that exist, and it will not resolve any impasse. I appeal to those members at the back of the Chamber, many of whom were elected——

**One Nation Party members** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** I hear the chuckles. Many of those members say that they were elected on a platform——

**Mr Nelson:** Are you asking for support from One Nation?

**Mr ELDER:** In this case, no. We have never sought its support. What I am saying is simply this: One Nation members were elected on a so-called platform of cleaning up the Parliament. It will be interesting to see whether they have the courage of their convictions.

**Mr Nelson:** Support you and betray the people of Tablelands?

**Mr ELDER:** No. I am not looking for support from One Nation members. I do not want their support and would not seek their support. After 20 years of studying Parliament and understanding Parliament, the member would know that the debate——

**Mr Nelson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will continue.

**Mr ELDER:** After the member's 20 years of learning so much about Parliament and being across what goes on in Parliament, I am not seeking his support, because this is not a debate about support for the Labor Party. If the member had been awake, he would know that this is a debate about supporting the Speaker of this Parliament. This debate is about cleaning up the Parliament and supporting the Speaker's ruling.

**Mr Nelson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Tablelands!

**Mr ELDER:** Mr Speaker, I have to say in all honesty that there is a member who lets his ego get in the way of his ego. There is a member who has no idea what this debate is about. I appeal to his leader: this is not a debate about supporting the Opposition or the Government; this is about supporting the ruling of the Speaker.

**Mr Borbidge:** Careful. He's been studying this for 20 years.

**Mr ELDER:** I know, and that is what worries me. When someone has been studying that hard for 20 years, it says a lot about the education system under the Bjelke-Petersen Government.

I realise that there is a temptation to vote on any measure that would effectively censure the Government. That is the temptation: to censure the Government. But this debate is about frivolous complaints being raised during the business of the House——

**Mr Nelson:** Frivolous?

**Mr ELDER:**——frivolous motions against Speaker's rulings when, under the Standing Orders, they are patently correct.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The Leader of the Opposition is trying to justify this position by having a weird combination of what is said in Hansard and some body language to prove his point. What that means from now on is that if I am going to make a contribution in this House, I will have to make it with my arms folded. This is absurd. In fact, it is an indictment on the position that I believe the Opposition is going to take over the next few years in this Parliament. This is one debate that the Leader of the Opposition should not have brought on, because it did not justify the position that he took.

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