



Speech by

Mrs E. CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 15 September 1998

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT; JUDICIAL PROCESS

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (10.28 a.m.): It is with some concern that I raise incidents that occurred over the past weeks which affected members of this House. Some members of the media and some members of the House have taken the opportunity to assume the guilt of another member well in advance of any judicial process. After due process, if a case is to be answered, I would hope that the full force of the law is applied. However, at the time of the first publicity of the allegations that had been made, no approach to the accused person had been made by police, no case had been made, no court hearing had been held and no case proven. Despite this, we heard calls for the member to resign, calls for by-elections and even calls to have the member's legal entitlements suspended or stripped. All this, yet no approach had been made to the member by police to discuss the issue.

I reiterate that if a case is proven, may the full force of the law be applied. However, until then it is vital that we continue to respect the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, to have respect for the member's family and, particularly, to respect the rights of the member himself to the presumption of innocence. We should be jealously guarding that right, not only for those of us inside this Chamber but on also on behalf of all Queenslanders.
