



Speech by

Hon. M. FOLEY

MEMBER FOR YERONGA

Hansard 27 August 1998

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts) (1.29 a.m.): I second the motion moved by the Leader of the House. This motion puts into place some security for the debating of private members' Bills. As such, it enhances the standing of private members. It should be remembered that the term "backbencher" is really a misnomer. We are all members of the Parliament and the role of the private member is very important indeed. At this moment in history, when the Parliament is so finely balanced, it is of the utmost importance.

The first Bill in modern Queensland history to be introduced and passed as a private member's Bill was the Parliamentary Papers Bill, which I had the honour of introducing and participating in the passage of in 1992. I make the point that that Bill came out of a cooperative approach.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I accept the interjection from the member for Moggill. The point of that Bill is that it reflected the hard work done by the Privileges Committee at that time. It was able to achieve passage because of a lot of hard work done by the committee in getting cross-party support for what turned out to be an important reform not only in principle to the law affecting parliamentary privilege but also in practice in that it allowed members of the press, the public and members of this House quicker access to the early proofs of Hansard.

In more recent times in a finely balanced House we have seen the importance of the Carruthers Inquiry Enabling Bill, which was introduced while Labor was in Opposition. We have seen also the effect of not having some secure method of ensuring that these Bills get debated. We saw Labor's Government Publicity Control Bill and the Freedom of Information Amendment Bill simply languish on the Notice Paper. The former coalition Government was able to ignore those Bills, because they were not Government business. This motion changes the situation. I commend the Leader of the House for his initiative. It is an important parliamentary reform and I encourage all honourable members to support it.
