



Speech by

**BILL FELDMAN**

**MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE**

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Hansard 17 August 1999

### **CENSURE OF MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

**Mr FELDMAN** (Caboolture—ONP) (6.25 p.m.): I rise in support of the Leader of the Opposition in the censure of the member for Ipswich and the denial of ministerial entitlements and salary for the period that he is stood aside from the Ministry. I still believe in miracles. I actually believe that a miracle happened on the Bruce Highway—the road to Brisbane—just as the miracle happened on the road to Damascus. And in Brisbane, just as in Damascus, I thought that the scales may have finally fallen from the eyes of the member for Nicklin.

During the confidence debate in which the Shreddergate saga was raised, the member for Nicklin was asked whether he was a reformer or a seat warmer. At that stage he chose to warm the seat, as he steadfastly refused to see the corruption and the abuse of office inherent in this Labor Government. There are none so blind as those who will not see. Well, after 13 months of seat warming and dutifully creeping across the floor in meek support of this self-serving Government, he has finally developed the courage to stand up for truth and honesty. I applaud him for that. He has finally seen the corruption that is a trademark of this Government. At last, he is prepared to support a censure motion against the vice captain of the fatal five. The grounds to do so are ample and just. Just as they were then, they are now.

It is only right that the member for Ipswich no longer hold the position of Treasurer due to recent events over the Internet betting affair. His involvement in such a disgraceful misuse of public power and office is not a light matter. The people of this State elect members of Parliament to represent their interests in this House. And in doing so, they place their trust in elected members to do what is right and to ensure a fair deal for them in all matters before this House. The Premier has an extra onus of trust and responsibility in establishing a Cabinet of Ministers of honesty, integrity and professionalism. Failure to do so is also a breach of faith with the public and an indication of failure to carry out the duties of that position. The net bet affair reveals the failure of the Premier to establish a Ministry of the calibre to which I referred earlier. It is clear that the Treasurer also failed to conduct himself in a manner expected of a man in such a position. And it is clear that the knowledge of such unsatisfactory behaviour was not only known by the Premier but likely by all other members of the Labor Party.

The public of Queensland deserve a Treasurer they can trust. His position—probably more than any other Cabinet position—poses potential for conflict of interest. His position as Treasurer requires absolutely impeccable integrity. The Treasurer should be possessed of a AAA integrity rating. Members of the Goss Cabinet first demonstrated, by participating in the shredding of evidence, that they had no scruples and no integrity. This Government's latest sordid escapade simply reinforces that infamy and the total lack of credibility. These are not the qualities that the people of Queensland need or deserve in a Treasurer.

The involvement, also, of the member for Woodridge is underhand and completely unacceptable. His actions, by any standards, represent an abuse of power by someone who is in no position to plead ignorance to such abuse of the law or privilege. I am appalled that this discredited member used a pair to enable the Government's motion earlier today to pass. To what extent was the Labor Party machine aware of his actions? The whole affair mirrors the Heiner debacle and the questionable business involvements of Labor Holdings. There is a stench of corruption that not only

spreads widely but also has deep roots and a strong wall of protection. A black cloud hangs over the Labor Party and makes one wonder about the corruption and the deceit that we do not know about, that the public does not know about, and that the Labor Party is so practised and adept at keeping hidden within.

The member for Ipswich has voluntarily— or so he says—stood aside from his ministerial position of Treasurer and I assume he will continue to do so if, or until, he has been cleared of any responsibility for his involvement in the Internet betting affair. As a Minister, he receives certain entitlements and \$50,000 extra salary. These extras are to account for the additional duties and responsibilities involved in such a position. Whilst the member is no longer in the position of Treasurer, and hence is no longer taking on those extra responsibilities or undertaking the extra functions of that role, he should not receive those entitlements and payments. Surely one can easily see the commonsense in this argument. Not only is it a commonsense approach, but it is the right thing to do.

Why should a member who, of his own accord, finds himself in a position of having to stand down from his ministerial position be still entitled to the privileges that come with that position? He should not, and I am positive that the people of Queensland would agree. The Government believes that it can come into this House today and quickly wash away the scum from this affair with some clever rhetoric, but it cannot.

Time expired.

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