



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 26 October 1999

CENSURE OF MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (6.40 p.m.): The motion moved by the Opposition tonight smacks of rank hypocrisy. It is grubby politics of the worst order. It is consistent with the smear and innuendo that has become the hallmark of an Opposition that is bereft of any initiative or original thought.

The Opposition is correct on one point: the pay increase that was granted to the Energex CEO, Brian Blinco, was not authorised by either of the shareholding Ministers, Mr McGrady or me. The question that has to be asked is: how could that have occurred? What were the processes in place that allowed the board of Energex to grant such an increase to its chief executive? The answer lies in the very processes that were in place in the days when a coalition Government sat on the Treasury benches. Those processes proved to be wholly inadequate.

The previous Government simply did not want to know about executive remuneration. As the Premier demonstrated clearly this morning, when the issue of GOC boards was taken up with former coalition Government shareholding Ministers, they said, "That's a matter for the board members themselves." Now of course we hear sanctimonious cant from Opposition members who are saying that this is a disgraceful set of affairs. What is disgraceful is their hypocrisy.

This Government has acted in relation to this matter. We have put in place very strong guidelines for the future, with disclosure requirements on boards and CEOs to be outlined in their annual reports. That is in stark contrast to a coalition that, when in office, did nothing other than allow GOCs to write blank cheques for their senior executives. The hypocrisy is so palpable that one could cut it with a knife.

The same people who are so self-righteous today were the ones who decided to try to spread the smear a bit wider. Today in question time, questions were asked of me about remuneration that was paid to GOC directors—not all GOC directors, only two. One was the former member for Cairns, Mr Keith De Lacy, and the other was Mr Bird. I said that I did not carry all the information with me, but would provide the information to the House and I do so accordingly.

As the Chair of Ergon Energy, Keith De Lacy receives annual remuneration of \$54,000. As a director of the retail subsidiary Ergon (Retail) he receives annual remuneration of \$16,072. In his position as the director of the QIC board, the annual figure is \$30,000. Mr Bird's annual remuneration as a director of Ergon Energy (Retail) is \$16,072. In respect of being the director of the TAB board, it is \$16,000. The travel costs of all GOC board directors is exactly the same as it always has been. On appropriate business, it is met by the GOC.

As the Leader of the Opposition carries on about old mates and old cronies, I let it be known that a former Liberal Party and National Party member of the House, Ms Beryce Nelson, sat on the boards of both Energex (Retail) and Energex (Distribution). Not a cry was heard about that from the Leader of the Opposition. No comment was made about Martin Tenni, a former National Party Minister, being a director of Tarong Energy. No comment was made about a former Liberal member of Parliament, Ian Prentice, being a director of the Ports Corporation. No comment was made about a former National Party Federal member, Ray Braithwaite, being appointed to the Mackay Port Authority. No comment was made about ex-Senator Stan Collard being appointed to the State Library Board. No comment was made about a former press secretary to Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Allen Callaghan—the

same person who was convicted of an offence involving some \$50,000 in 1987—being appointed to the State Library Board. No comment was made about former National Party candidate, Betty Byrne Henderson, being appointed to the Brisbane Cricket Ground Trust and the Harness Racing Board. No comment was made about a Liberal candidate for Redcliffe, Judy Beresford, being appointed to the Royal Queensland Theatre Company. No comment, no comment, no comment.

Why was there no comment from the Leader of the Opposition? Because he is a hypocrite! If people are qualified to be appointed to boards, they are entitled to proper remuneration. This Opposition is totally hypocritical if it claims cronyism on the part of this Government when it made it an absolute art form. I offer no criticism about those individuals. I trust that they made a proper contribution to the boards on which they sat. I hope that they were properly remunerated for the task. I am confident that our board members will also be so remunerated.

Time expired.
