



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 24 August 1999

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (4.53 p.m.): I move—

"That the Deputy Speaker's ruling that there was no point of order relative to the Premier swearing about the Clerk's office be dissented from."

On 17 August, I believe this House witnessed what was a body blow to parliamentary standards in this State when the Premier swore at the Clerk's office. That is unparalleled and unprecedented in the history of this State. Members here witnessed what must go down in the records of this place as one of the most disgraceful and unprincipled acts ever witnessed. Of course, the Deputy Speaker failed to take any action in relation to the Premier.

It is the Premier who stands in this place day after day—several times every day and several times every question time—and insists upon and talks about parliamentary standards. We know what a great perception he tries to portray, but it is one sham after the other.

The truth is that, when the crunch came on 17 August in this House, the Premier swore in relation to the Clerk's office—it is in the Hansard record and I am not going to repeat it—and then refused to withdraw it. In fact, the Premier even denied that he made such a statement. But the record speaks for itself. A number of members on this side of the House and, I believe, a number of members on the other side of the House heard those words uttered. There is no point in members denying that it occurred. It certainly occurred, and it is there in the record for the world to see and for the world to read.

The issue here is the fact that every day, time after time, it is the Premier who comes in here and talks about parliamentary standards. I refer to a letter dated 25 June last year which the Premier—the then Leader of the Opposition—wrote to the member for Nicklin. The Premier went to great lengths to say—

"I note and share your strongly held desire to lift the standard of behaviour in Parliament."

That was a letter that the Premier wrote to the member for Nicklin when he gained his support to take office in this House. Since that time, and at every opportunity, the Premier has stood in this place and talked about parliamentary standards. Yet at the end of the day, we see exactly the opposite happening.

This behaviour was unprecedented and unparalleled. This sanctimonious Premier will, of course, blame anyone who cannot fight back and who cannot speak for themselves in this place. That is what happened on 17 August, when the Deputy Speaker failed to take action. That is what this dissent motion is about. The Premier easily could have stood in this House and apologised. That is what ought to have happened, and I believe that is what all members would have expected to happen. But that did not occur—far from it. The Premier tried to indicate, through points of order, that he did not make such a statement.

Not only did I hear the remark, but the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, heard it; the member for Toowoomba South, Mr Horan, heard it; and the member for Noosa, Mr Davidson, heard it. We all rose to take points of order at that time, and we indicated that we had heard the Premier swear

at the Clerk's office. Hansard also reveals this. It shows on page 3076 that, clearly, the Premier swore at the Clerk's office. Yet the Premier appeared to deny it. And more importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker refused to force the Premier to apologise. In fact, the Deputy Speaker seemed to be unperturbed by this matter. Instead, Mr Deputy Speaker ruled that there was no point of order on each occasion that the matter was raised in this place. Again, the record speaks for itself.

Under this Government, the behaviour of Labor members reaches new lows and new depths daily. The Premier likes to shrug his shoulders, laugh, play the actor and so forth. But at the end of the day, the truth hurts. It is there in Hansard, and the Premier cannot walk away from it.

This is only one example of the denigration by the Premier of people who cannot fight back and speak for themselves. That is why, at that particular point in time, members on this side of the House felt strongly that the Deputy Speaker should have insisted that the Premier retract those words. I think it is fair to say that we could have expected the Premier to retract those words and apologise.

The Premier indulges in double standards and cheap political point-scoring exercises in this place on many occasions. We saw an example of this in that note that he wrote to the member for Nicklin. Before the ink was barely dry on the paper, he was coming into this place and doing the exact opposite in relation to parliamentary standards. Yet whenever the Premier and his fellow Labor colleagues stand in this House and start to take a stand on something, the so-called standards fall away very quickly and new lows are reached. Yet one pious statement after the other is forthcoming from the lips of the Premier in this House.

When considering parliamentary standards, I think it is fair to say that one only has to look at the number of times the guillotine—the gag—was used last week to see quite clearly exactly how this Government operates.

It has been the hallmark of this Government time and time again to take this course of action. If the Premier cannot provide an answer, he denigrates somebody else and blames somebody else. Blame comes very easily to the Labor Party. I think it was George Washington who wrote that every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those present. We do not find that sort of feeling coming from the Premier; his behaviour is anything but that. The people of Queensland can observe first-hand how they are deceived by this Government in relation to the so-called parliamentary standards.

We saw abundant examples of that in this House last week. We saw the Premier swearing in relation to Clerk's office and we also saw the gag being used in debate. Double standards simply drip from the Premier's lips every time he utters words in this place.

I think it is fair to say that last week members on this side of the House had every reason to expect that the Deputy Speaker would have insisted upon the Premier apologising for his remarks. That would have been the end of the matter. As has happened on so many occasions, the Premier believed that he had an opportunity to get away with denigrating someone who could not fight back. Labor always blames someone else for its own failings.

On 17 August 1999 we saw a despicable act perpetrated by the Premier. It is something which we have come to expect from the Labor Party and this Premier. It is little wonder that members rise in this place and move dissent from the Speaker's ruling. Members do not move dissent lightly—far from it. Members move dissent from the Speaker's ruling only as a result of the actions of those opposite and the failure of the Speaker or Deputy Speaker to take the action required under the Standing Orders. The Deputy Speaker did not take action last Tuesday.

Obviously, the dissent motion has been moved because we on this side of the Chamber feel that the Deputy Speaker ought to have required the Premier to apologise. In that way the matter could have been ended forthwith. The Premier could have apologised and the matter would have been all over. This Premier never backs down. He does not accept responsibility for his own actions. When the Premier finds himself in a difficult situation he always blames someone else. This is something for which this Premier has become very well known in the community. It is something that is going to stick.

Time expired.
