



Speech by

**Hon. J. ELDER**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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Hansard 25 August 1999

### **SES POSITIONS, MERIT SELECTION**

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): Members opposite are keen to speak about mates and cronies. The record shows quite clearly that, when it comes to cronies, it is one of the few areas where they know what they are talking about. The members opposite are showing that, more than anything else, they are really good haters.

When they came into office in 1996 we had one of the greatest blood-lettings that had ever taken place in the Queensland Public Service. Almost every public servant who had served the people of Queensland when we had a democratically elected Labor Government in office was deemed to have been some sort of crony. Members opposite then put out a comprehensive list that caught every one of them. It makes good reading now. After I looked at the new contribution from the member for Clayfield, I went back and had a look at his old list. Amongst the Labor mates, cronies and buddies listed at the time was Gerard Bradley, who was described as having "close ALP links—not regarded as competent". That was enough for the incoming Treasurer, Joan Sheldon, to warrant tossing him out. Where did he go? He went to South Australia, which took a really radical view. It viewed him as a competent, professional public servant and gave him a job as Under Secretary to the Treasurer.

**Mr Braddy:** A Liberal Government.

**Mr ELDER:** It was a Liberal Government. I take my hat off to John Olsen and give him top marks for that. When we came back into office, we realised that Mr Bradley was completely apolitical and competent and that we needed someone like him as Under Treasurer in Queensland, and we brought him back. Then my director-general, Ross Rolfe—

**Mr Sullivan:** Who did they pick?

**Mr ELDER:** They picked a mate and a crony.

There was a filthy smear about Ross Rolfe, the director-general of my department. One point that I mused over for a long time was that he was noted as going to school with Kevin Rudd. We can see it now: some 30 years ago in the Year 11 history and science lessons at the Nambour State High School the conspiracy started that would culminate in setting public administration in Brisbane and keeping the Nationals out of office. It would have been impossible to make that charge in the context of someone who went to school with someone in the National Party! At least our bureaucrats went to school. And honourable members opposite talk about propriety. Let us look at what the list had to say about Royce Miller, QC. This is where it becomes nasty, as it did today. What did it say about Royce Miller, QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions? It stated—

"If he cannot be removed then he should be sidelined by employing an additional DPP."

That is what they knew about the separation of powers. We should ask the member for Crows Nest, because he would be full bottle on the separation of powers. It appears that members opposite do not learn the lessons of history, and they are doomed to repeat their mistakes. And repeat them they do. That is quite evident from the contribution of the member for Clayfield.

In that first hit list the things said about people were highly questionable. About one officer it was stated: "Conducting a physical relationship with his secretary." Another officer was labled a "Nazi feminist" and another was described as a "protected species". They even went as far as sacking Graham Tucker, the chair of Suncorp. Why? Because he had the temerity to accept an appointment from the Goss Government, they said, "If he did that, he has to be a crony and a mate. Out he goes."

The fact of the matter is that, if it looks like a hit list, walks like a hit list and quacks like a hit list, it is a hit list. The member for Clayfield is obsessed with hit lists, and he is compiling them again. He likes the idea of naming enemies. He likes to list them. One of the job requirements of coalition staffers in the Opposition office would have to read: "Must be good at making lists." They have a problem; it will be a long list. If this is the starting point, the list will be an extra long one by the time we have finished in Government. Anyone who serves, accepts an appointment or even works with us will end up on one of the hit lists of the member for Clayfield. They will not have any friends. There will be so many people on the list, people will ask, "Why don't you have any friends?" They will all be on the list. The people of Queensland will know that they do not have any friends, because they will all be on the list. The fact of the matter is that they have not learnt and they are back in the business of compiling lists, naming people—

**A Government member:** With the support of Richard Nixon over there.

**Mr ELDER:** Again, that will be with the support of "Tricky Dickie"—Richard Nixon. They are up to their old tricks again. They will pay the penalty when the time comes again. They always do.

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