



Speech by

**Mrs J. GAMIN**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Hansard 17 August 1999

**MR T. NEWTON**

**Mrs GAMIN** (Burleigh—NPA) (2.16 a.m.): I am proud to call myself a friend of Ted Newton, who was an officer of this Parliament for almost 30 years and who finished up last Friday, having been told that his services to the protocol office are no longer required by the Parliament. The member for Indooroopilly used the term "redundancy"—in other words, he got the sack.

Ted has always been wonderfully helpful and kind, not only to me personally but to all members who have come to him for advice and assistance. He would do anything for you and he has done so much for so many of us. Every single electorate officer over the whole 89 electorates speaks highly of Ted. Electorate officers up and down the State say that, of all the parliamentary officers they deal with, he has been the one who has been unfailingly helpful. They speak more highly of Ted than of any other officer in the Parliament.

My friendship with Ted goes back a long way. He was one of the first parliamentary officers whom I got to know when I first came into this place in 1988. All members who come into this place on a by-election know just how hard it is. One's colleagues say, "Welcome to the Parliament", and then they promptly forget the new member. They dash off on their fascinating and complex affairs and they never give them another thought. One is completely lost, and does not know how to find the toilets let alone the Bills and Papers Office, the bloke who will fix a pager or the travel section, which Ted managed when I first came to this place. Ted was really good to me way back then. We kept in contact during my enforced absence for three years and we have cemented our firm friendship and professional association since I returned to this place in 1992. Ted was a fountain of advice and he has helped me out many times with special interest tours and many other aspects of parliamentary service to the community.

I have heard some pretty corny jokes, I have learned some good cooking hints and I now understand more about the Anglican Church. Ted's friends who have tried out his recipes hope that he will compile a cookery book. I have come to appreciate Ted's profound knowledge of Parliament and its habits and customs, his comprehensive understanding of the evolution of what we call the Westminster system of Government and his deep and abiding love for this institution, the Parliament of Queensland.

His appointment to the protocol section some years ago gave the Parliament a great boost. Only in June an internal review was conducted and Ted received glowing bipartisan comments on his work and how valuable he was to the Queensland Parliament. I was delighted to be asked to take part in that review and I had hoped to see Ted recognised for his sterling efforts over the years. He really deserved promotion. I certainly did not expect to see him get the sack.

The Parliament is the people's House and surely its staff do not deserve to be tangled up in the political machinations of the Labor Party. Government members should hang their heads in shame at what is happening to this Parliament. I know that individual members on the Government side have privately expressed concern to Ted and sorrow at what has happened to him, so I am surprised and shocked that I have not seen a public display of support for Ted Newton coming from the Government benches. Labor members, whether in Government as they are now or when they were in Opposition, have received an enormous amount of assistance from this officer. They have been pleased to be on the receiving end. It is about time they gave something back.

Ted Newton has served this Parliament well. His loyalty to the Parliament is unquestioned. I think it is shameful that a dedicated officer of his calibre should be summarily dismissed in such a cavalier fashion—"Your services are no longer required." So much for staff morale, natural justice and good industrial relations! After all of those years of exemplary service he has been dismissed. What a disgraceful way to treat a loyal and trusted servant of the public and this Parliament. I want Ted to know that at least on this side of the House his friendship has been greatly valued. We are very sad for him, and the Queensland Parliament will sorely miss his services. I wish him well in his future endeavours and I look forward to our continued friendship.

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