



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 26 October 1999

PRIVILEGE

Public Service Appointments

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (2.30 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The Leader of the Opposition today raised a number of inaccurate statements in relation to a number of public servants in my department and in other departments, including Helen Ringrose, Peter Bridgman and Barry Carbon. I am advised as follows.

In terms of Helen Ringrose, the new Deputy Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the position of Deputy Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet was advertised as a Senior Executive Service Level 3 in the Government Gazette, the Courier-Mail and the Australian. Helen Ringrose was appointed to this position on 29 July 1999 following an open merit recruitment and selection exercise. To facilitate remuneration arrangements similar to the terms and conditions that Ms Ringrose received in her former position with the Brisbane City Council, it was necessary to appoint Ms Ringrose by way of a contract of employment under section 70 of the Public Service Act 1996. It is worth noting that Ms Ringrose gained no financial advantage by moving to the State sector. I have to ask: what does the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, have against women?

In terms of the second position—Peter Bridgman—the position of Executive Director of the Legal Policy Directorate of the Policy Co-ordination Division was advertised in the Queensland Government Gazette on 5, 12 and 19 February 1999 and in the Courier-Mail on 6 February 1999. Applications closed on 22 February 1999. Peter Bridgman was the only applicant for the position. The selection committee consisted of the Deputy Director-General, Policy Co-ordination Division; the Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel; and an officer of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. Mr Bridgman was interviewed by the selection committee and assessed against the selection criteria and, based on the assessment of his application and interview, Mr Bridgman was recommended for appointment to the position.

The Director-General of my department, Dr Glyn Davis, had no role in the selection of Mr Bridgman, who was seconded and subsequently appointed according to standard Public Service procedures. I note that Mr Bridgman held a highly sensitive role as legal counsel and head of legal policy within the Department of Primary Industries during the Borbidge Government. He served in that role, as in his present role, with professionalism.

The third and final point is in relation to Barry Carbon. The position of Director-General, Environmental Protection Agency was advertised nationally in April 1999 with a closing date of 10 May 1999. The selection panel consisted of the Minister, that is, the Honourable Rod Welford, MLA; the Public Service Commissioner; the President of the Australian Industry Group, Mr Ken Porter; and the coordinator of the Queensland Conservation Council. They were industry representatives. The panel unanimously recommended that Mr Barry Carbon be appointed to the position. Mr Carbon had previously occupied this position on a short-term basis for eight months from October 1998. Mr Carbon had been a chief executive in various other jurisdictions since 1985. In other words, he is a very senior and experienced chief executive. He was CEO of the Western Australian EPA from 1985 to 1993. He was then CEO of the Commonwealth EPA from 1993 to 1996.

It has been the practice in Queensland for certain senior CEOs to be paid at a salary point that would not have been available to a less experienced appointee to the same position. Other examples

include Mr Tom Fenwick, paid at a CEO3 rate while working in DPI and DNR; Mr Bruce Wilson, paid at a CEO3 rate while working in Queensland Transport following the split in the Transport and Main Roads portfolios; and Dr Rob Stable, who has been paid a "market allowance" on top of the CEO3 salary. They were all directors-general under the Borbidge Government, even though Dr Stable was the Director-General of Health when I was Health Minister. It is therefore quite reasonable for another senior CEO to be paid at a higher pay point to reflect his personal standing and experience.

The facts about CEO pay points are well known. The full range of 11 CEO pay points is published in the Government Gazette. But the decision on the actual amount payable to an individual CEO should always be a matter on which the Premier must form a judgment and recommend an appropriate amount to Governor in Council, which I think is appropriate for the Premier to do. This is simply good management practice. It is only appropriate that Queensland CEOs are paid what they are worth—no more and no less. These people have been appropriately appointed following due process, and I urge the Leader of the Opposition to stop this character assassination of decent public servants in this State.
