



Speech by

Hon. RUSSELL COOPER

MEMBER FOR CROWS NEST

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SES POSITIONS, MERIT SELECTION

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—NPA) (6.45 p.m.): This debate is supposed to be about principles, but all we have seen from the other side of the House is people trying to justify the appointment of cronies and mates. They have not done a very good job of it because, as far as we are concerned, instead of detailing the so-called talent of some of the people they have appointed, all they have done is make excuses for appointing cronies and mates. What is alarming is the blatant disregard they have had for people's respect. They have just foisted and imposed people upon the taxpayers of this State. I am talking about people who have taken their superannuation and left this place, but they have to come back to put their snout in the trough. I can mention the former Premier, Wayne Goss, and Keith De Lacy—the list goes on and on and on.

I mentioned Wayne Goss, although I would have thought he was better than that. His Government was an absolute failure; it wrecked rural and regional Queensland in six short years, although it paid the price for doing so. At least its members could hold their heads up in many respects, whereas this Beattie Labor Government has sunk to a new low as far as the blatant appointment of so many cronies and mates is concerned. It goes right back through the entire union and political spectrum. It is sickening and needs to be exposed because it is a cancer eating at that side of the House.

When we took over Government in 1996, a couple of my daughters were working for other Ministers. That made the front page of the Courier-Mail. Terrible, isn't it? There are Ministers of this Government who have daughters working in Minister's offices and there has not been one word said about it: one rule for them, one rule for us.

We have heard the Carruthers expenses mentioned today and yesterday. There is no question that those expenses were horrific. We thought that, too. We thought they were a disgrace. Who brought that inquiry on? The people opposite; the Labor Party—Labor cronies working with their CJC cronies! They did it. The cost of the Carruthers inquiry can be laid right at the feet of the Labor Party. That is where it came from. While we are aware that the CJC is trying to re-establish its credibility, in 1996 the cronyism and the political bias were unbelievable.

Mr Borbidge: They had the legal advice locked in the safe.

Mr COOPER: They had the legal advice locked in the safe. The CJC had known for 10 months that there was no case to answer, yet it went ahead because cronies of those opposite were working for the CJC. While it is different today—I know that the CJC is trying to get out from under—what happened then was a disgrace. The fact that the CJC put taxpayers to that expense is an utter disgrace. In private discussions I have had with many members opposite that has been confirmed. They know that it was a political witch-hunt. They know that it was a disgrace, because most of the people—the decent ones—over there have recognised that it was a political witch-hunt.

This is also a venal Government—so greedy that all it does is put its mates first, regardless of the people's wishes. It just forces its mates upon the public sector even though in many cases, as most people know, they do not have the ability to do the job. The power industry is one example. The Premier gets up and says, "They get only \$140 a meeting." It is not a question of money; it is the fact

that the Government is putting these boards in place to run the electricity industry around the State but they are packed and stacked with Labor cronies. It is sickening.

More names will be mentioned. If anyone thinks that those people should remain in place when we on this side of the House return to Government, they are wrong. That should not come as any surprise to those opposite. They should let the word go out to their cronies, wherever they are. The Labor Government does not care about anyone else. It will go on appointing cronies until it goes out of office, which is where it belongs. Then it will find that those people will not last.

This is a shameful Government. The Beattie Government is a disgrace even compared to the Goss Labor Government. It is sending politics right back into the past—jackboot thugs and union thugs running the Government. Behind the fancy smiles those opposite wear lurks an evil. An evil lurks behind so many of those opposite. We know that their agenda is to try to load the various boards and institutions of this State. If those opposite think that those people will remain after a change of Government, they are wrong.

Time expired.
