



Speech by

**Mr SANTO SANTORO**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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### **LABOR PARTY CRONYISM**

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—LP) (11.30 a.m.): Since outlining to this House the extent to which cronyism is being practised by this Government and since highlighting the coalition's "dob in a crony" campaign, my office has been inundated with information from concerned public servants. The names of cronies are falling like the proverbial dead cats from trees.

In the future I will table a revised crony list, and as each week passes I am sure that this Government will continue to do its utmost to add to this list by its compulsion to look after its mates. However, my great concern is not so much political patronage in statutory authorities or even the public sector generally, but how this Government is systematically undermining the core Public Service by full frontal attacks on the principle of merit appointment.

If the trend that has been gaining pace over the past few months continues, I hold grave fears that the upper echelon of the Public Service will be so thoroughly politicised that good public administration will begin to suffer greatly, and the losers will be the Queensland community. I remind the House of what the Fitzgerald report said about the risk of political interference in Public Service appointments. It states—

"A system which provides the Executive Government with control over the careers of public officials adds enormously to the pressures upon those who are even moderately ambitious. Merit can be ignored, perceived disloyalty punished, and personal or political loyalties rewarded. Once there are signs that a Government prefers its favourites when vacancies occur or other opportunities arise, the pressure upon those within the system becomes immense. More junior public servants rapidly become aware of the need to please politicians and senior officials who can help or damage their careers, and

not to promote displeasure by making embarrassing disclosures."

A Public Service staffed by yes-men or yes-women is a Public Service that is not giving the best advice. Wrong decisions can and will be made, and good public administration begins an inevitable decline. Fitzgerald recommended that all Public Service positions should be publicly advertised and filled on merit. He indicated that even chief executive positions should be publicly advertised.

The Public Service Act sets out in section 24 a list of principles that are to guide Public Service employment. The first of these is basing selection decisions on merit and a further one is avoiding nepotism and patronage. This applies to all Public Service officers. We have only to look at section 8 to see that it applies to chief executives and members of the SES.

The Public Service Commissioner is empowered to issue directives under the Act. Under the coalition Government, the then Public Service Commissioner issued a number of directives. Honourable members should peruse directives 5 and 6 of 1996 and directives 5 and 15 of 1997. The effect of these directives was that all vacancies in the senior level of the Public Service, including chief executives and SES officers, had to be advertised, had to be selected on merit, had to have an independent selection panel and that documentation had to be retained. There were no exceptions. There were no opportunities for grace and favour appointments at the senior level.

The Public Service Commissioner is required by section 33 to promote the principles of Public Service management in the Act, which include making selection decisions on merit and avoiding nepotism and patronage. Yet as soon as the Beattie Labor administration was sworn in, merit

and equity went out the back door. In one of the most disgraceful, cynical and hypocritical actions by a senior public servant, Brian Head, in his capacity of Acting Public Service Commissioner—he was not even appointed to the job—issued directive 9 of 1998, which became operational on 24 July 1998, just a little bit past the three-week mark for the Beattie Labor Government.

I draw the attention of honourable members to paragraph 5.5 of this directive. What it did was exempt the position Brian Head was acting in, as well as all other chief executive positions, from the need for a selection committee to be established if the Premier so determined. On that same day—for the Public Service it is a day of infamy—he issued directive 8 of 1998, which deleted the position he was acting in and those of all other chief executives from the requirement that they be advertised. With one king hit, Brian Head ensured that chief executives could be appointed without any regard for merit or equity. At the same time, the Government increased the pay of CEO cronies by tens of thousands of dollars.

So the Acting Public Service Commissioner gave to the Premier the power to appoint whom he likes with absolutely no checks or balances. At the very same time he ignored and held in contempt the requirement in the Act that positions be filled on merit and that nepotism and patronage be avoided. What happened? No sooner had these directives been issued than no fewer than seven chief executives were appointed without their positions being advertised.

No doubt to reward Brian Head for selling out and in recognition of his service to the ALP Government, the Premier appointed him Public Service Commissioner, with a big pay increase as a further sweetener. Brian Head has no credibility and he has no independence. To expect this person to defend a politically independent Public Service would be a total waste of time.

Then we had Glyn Davis appointed as Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Dr Davis is an academic who has left no prints in the sand in terms of practical achievements in the real world. He had never been Director-General of the Premier's Department under the Goss Government and has shown since his appointment a capacity only to wallow in useless procedure and look after his many Labor academic mates.

Gerard Bradley got the nod back in Treasury. However, I now feel sorry for him after the member for Ipswich bucketed him for failing to give him politically expedient advice. No doubt the allure of Adelaide is growing by the day both for him and for Imelda.

Ross Rolfe got the nod in the Department of State Development, having been appointed Director-General during the Mundingburra

campaign with less than a month's experience at the desk. He had no experience in State Development, unless we count his time working for Chevron. Here is a person who can be held up as an exemplar of conflict of duty and interest.

Jane McDonnell is another example of how froth rises to the top. She had been appointed Director-General of Justice for only three months or so before her services were dispensed with in 1996. Before that she was looking after stamp duties. Her meritless appointment has come back to haunt this Government. With her failure to manage the department competently and the provocation of more human resource problems than any other Director-General of Justice, she is another example of how Labor appoints to top jobs content-free people who, on top of that, could not manage a toy submarine in a bath tub.

Ken Smith is back again. He was the Socialist Left soul mate of Dick Persson, who was brought up from New South Wales. He has never served in a department of families, let alone headed one. His expertise was housing. In one of the most regretted decisions of the last Government, Di McCauley kept him on as head of the Department of Local Government for a number of months, but he could not cut the mustard. He was hopeless, and this bureaucratic turkey was eventually dispatched to Turkey. Yet here we are. He is back again.

Finally, and at the top of crony class, we have Marg O'Donnell. She has never been a director-general. She was only ever a lower/middle ranking public servant who got 10 out of 10 for self-promotion and disloyalty. This last feature is one that her Minister should know all about; allegedly she has been bucketing her Minister all around town. She is also a hopeless administrator and is well known in her department for her bad temper, shocking manners and a capacity to blame everybody else for her own quite significant shortcomings.

None of these persons got their jobs through a fair merit and equity process and one of them had not even previously been a director-general, here or elsewhere. With the exception of Gerard Bradley, each and every one of them is a professional Labor hanger-on.

On 23 April, Brian Head issued a further directive which now exempts all SES positions—I repeat: all SES positions—from being advertised. The merit principle demolition king has now determined that the whole of the SES should be opened up to meritless appointments. Where is this going to end? What mates are lined up for top jobs, and at the taxpayer's expense?

This is a Government without shame or principle. It has appointed a raft of persons to top jobs without any concern for fairness, the Fitzgerald report or even the direct and plain requirements of the Public Service Act. Where will it end?

I continue to encourage public servants and other concerned citizens to contact my office, as they have been doing in droves over the past few weeks. They can phone, fax, email or just send a letter and join the "dob in a crony" campaign. I suggest that Labor members opposite wait for my next contribution. I am sure that they will recognise the names. Perhaps they are members of their faction, branch or extended political family. I encourage them to stay tuned.

Some honourable members have interjected and mentioned the name of Bob Carroll. They are absolutely right. There was a leading advertiser or businessman in Queensland who tendered publicly for Government work and was given the work on merit. I challenged honourable members to refer the matter to the Auditor-General if they had any doubts about that statement and they never had the courage because they knew the answer. If Labor members in Opposition denigrate and destroy the reputation of innocent men, in Government they should expect people on this side to point out their totally hypocritical attitude when it comes to the appointment of people who are affiliated with them and the union movement that controls them.

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