



Speech by

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LABOR PARTY PRESELECTION OF FEMALE CANDIDATES

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (7.05 p.m.): I want to briefly speak about Labor machine men and how these Labor machine men put women in neutral. With a redistribution of State seats due out later this year, already the Labor machine men are out there carving out seats for themselves. Now that the Premier has publicly admitted that Mike Kaiser has well and truly passed his use-by date, he has been anointed as a "great" candidate for Woodridge.

This is yet another example of the arrogant way that the Labor Party operates and its total contempt for selecting women as candidates in safe seats. Mr Kaiser's blatant attempts of late to secure Woodridge have to be seen in the context of the recent Labor preselection brawl in Oxley. The whole Labor hierarchy, from Gary Gray down to Mike Kaiser, did everything possible to derail the preselection of Anne Scott. Who could forget the totally outrageous intervention of Gary Gray, who tipped a bucket of muck over Mrs Scott and tried to force her out of the race? Gary Gray tried to scuttle her candidacy by publicly calling for her to withdraw or have her husband, former Federal MP Les Scott, surrender his \$30,000 parliamentary pension during the preselection process.

Of course, Mr Gray, Mr Kaiser and AWU powerbroker Bill Ludwig, who personally plucked from much deserved obscurity Bernie Ripoll as the anointed male candidate, raised no such problems when Brenda Gibbs obtained Senate preselection; nor did they intervene when the member for Kurwongbah got her preselection, despite the fact that her husband is in receipt of a Federal payout. No, instead they supported a 32-year-old male candidate who had left no footprints in the sand. This nonentity got—wait for it—just 49 votes out of a possible 247 in a branch plebiscite. Not what one would call overwhelming support!

But in a show of democracy that Saddam Hussein would be proud of, when Labor's electoral college—and there read "powerbrokers"—voted, Mr Ripoll suddenly got majority support. What about the locally popular Mrs Scott? Well, she received zero votes. Let me repeat that: zero votes. So much for democracy and so much for advancing the cause of women. I notice how all the women opposite are staying quiet. If only they could pluck up the courage of their convictions and speak up for Mrs Anne Scott. However, it is left to people such as myself in this place to support Mrs Scott. As Anne Scott said of these factional heavyweights, "They just can't cope with having a woman in a winnable seat—they just want the winnable seats for their mates."

Well, at least the heavyweights of Labor do one thing to balance things up. Instead of preselecting women, they preselect lightweights—Mr Bernie "Who" Ripoll, and soon the man with the use-by sticker on his head, Mike Kaiser. Any reasonable person would have no option but to agree. Who could seriously argue that Bernie Ripoll, a 32-year-old ex-RAAF apprentice who caught Bill Ludwig's eye as an organiser in the Public Sector Union was an outstanding candidate? This nonentity received selection because "Uncle" Bill Ludwig can pick out hacks at 100 paces. When he saw Bernie Ripoll beavering away at keeping those all important membership dues coming in, he saw a soulmate. I suspect he thought, "Here he is, a man after my own tastes. He's got no achievements, he owes everything to the union, and he'll owe everything to me."

So here we have it. Let us preselect into a safe House of Representatives seat a good example of 1950s unionism. Female representation? Well, forget about that. Women can be preselected into seats where they do not

stand a chance. No better example can be given of that than, on the very day Bernie Ripoll was given his gold card for Federal Parliament from Labor, the Labor Party preselected a female candidate for Blair. In short, give a man the safe seat and give a woman an unwinnable one. That is the sort of gender balance politics that Labor plays.

This illustrates how Labor has failed spectacularly to live up to its targets for female representation in the Parliaments of Australia. No less than Queensland Labor stalwart, Senator Margaret Reynolds, said that Gary Gray's views on Mrs Scott were "anti-women" and that he was "back in the dark ages". By publicly backing the candidacy of Mike Kaiser and failing to publicly support Anne Scott the Premier of this State has shown, once again, that he is all rhetoric and no action. When push comes to shove it is clear that Peter Beattie, like his factional colleagues—I will not say mates because even they do not trust him—pushes men forward and shoves women aside. The next time that Mr Ripoll cares to talk about me in Federal Parliament I will again repay the compliment in this Parliament.
