



Speech by

**Mr R. QUINN**

**MEMBER FOR MERRIMAC**

---

Hansard 23 August 2000

### **ELECTORAL FRAUD**

**Mr QUINN** (Merrimac—LP) (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.39 p.m.): We have already seen three people in Townsville convicted of electoral fraud—two fined, one imprisoned—but an accurate reading of the court transcripts suggests that there should be more. There were 15 counts in which the person responsible could not be identified. That shows quite clearly that there should be more to come.

However, more importantly, it is the way in which the fraud was perpetrated that is of a worry to all of us on this side of the House. When the electoral roll is used as the basis for plebiscites within the Labor Party and enrolment forms are fraudulently completed to change the registered addresses of people living in Townsville—and there was one case where the person actually lived in Perth but was registered in Townsville—or when the residential or postal addresses of residents or electors are changed without their knowledge, then the electoral roll and the information contained therein can be used for other purposes. That is the nub of this debate. When false enrolment forms can be used in an ALP plebiscite, they can also be used in a general election, because when people go to vote they are not required to provide any identification. If the details of a person whose name appears on the roll are known, then it is quite easy for someone to impersonate that elector. That is the nub of the problem. That is why we are debating this motion.

This scenario is well understood by the ALP. We have only to look at the affidavit tendered by Karen Ehrmann in the court case to find out the depth of knowledge of this practice within the ALP. She pleaded guilty to charges, but she was in no way an instigator of the grand scheme. On her own confession, she was a bit player in a well-known scheme being carried out by the AWU long before she was involved. She was not a person with any power or great position. Most of the time, she was bullied and pressured by people in power. Karen Ehrmann goes on to state in her affidavit—

"Enrolment forms were only used for internal ballots. These people did not vote in general Local, State or Federal elections."

However, the next paragraph of the affidavit is the clincher—

"When I was asked to take part in a situation, in the Mundingburra Bi-Election, where people voted, using forged enrolments. I refused."

So Karen Ehrmann knew clearly that there was a scheme in the Mundingburra by-election to gather up forged enrolments to use at that by-election. That is electoral corruption. That is why this motion is being debated tonight. When the details of the scheme are known, then it can be used to one's own political advantage. Karen Ehrmann has confirmed in her affidavit that such a scheme was used in Mundingburra. However, she refused to take part in it. That is why this motion is before the House. The scheme has been used once. How many more times has it been used? Was it used prior to the Mundingburra by-election? Was it used subsequent to the Mundingburra by-election? Those are the questions that the members opposite have to answer. That is where the electoral corruption lies.

During all of that time, we had the three wise monkeys in the Labor Party—"I see no evil, I hear no evil, I do no evil." First of all, we had Don Brown, the President of the ALP, saying on a stack of bibles, "No electoral corruption." We had Joan Budd, the returning officer, who could not see an irregularity if one ran over her in the middle of the street. We had Mike Kaiser saying, "Everything is

okay in the ALP." Tonight, we have two past State secretaries of the ALP, Mike Kaiser and Peter Beattie, and the leader of the AWU faction—the faction involved in this—those three wise monkeys standing up and saying, "I saw no evil, I did no evil"—

**Mr Borbidge:** The Deputy Premier employed the returning officer.

**Mr QUINN:** That is exactly right. Their hands are soiled and they are in it right up to their armpits. It is a scheme that was identified quite clearly in the affidavit by Karen Ehrmann. It is a scheme that has been long running in the ALP. It is endemic in the ALP. Yet those members opposite come in here and say that they are not involved. What a joke they are! If there is any decency in the ALP opposite—

Time expired.

---