



Speech by

Mr R. QUINN

MEMBER FOR MERRIMAC

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ELECTORAL FRAUD

Mr QUINN (Merrimac—LP) (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.43 p.m.): There are some undeniable facts underpinning this debate tonight. One is that there is only one party in this Parliament that has three members convicted of electoral fraud—only one party. ALP members were convicted of 87 charges of electoral fraud. One of the other undeniable facts is that there is only one party that has a past State election candidate in jail for electoral fraud, and that is an albatross that the ALP will carry around its neck for some time in this House—87 charges, three convictions, one in jail.

That candidate, Karen Ehrmann, admitted that such practices of which she was convicted were endemic within the AWU faction of the ALP. The bottom line in all of this is that it has been the ALP that has shown us how easy it is to corrupt the electoral roll in Queensland. It has been the ALP that has shown how systemic and endemic that fraud is and how, if controlled properly, it can achieve the desired result—rotting an election. It did it systematically and in a planned and malicious way to get the desired result. That is the aspect of the Ehrmann ALP scandal in Townsville that is really worrying and sinister—the rotting of elections. Her admission that a similar organised scheme was used in the Mundingburra by-election to corrupt the result casts a shadow right across every other election held since then. If they can do it in one, they can do it in any election.

That is the real shadow, black mark and stain that the ALP has cast on every election since Mundingburra. After all, if a political party can corrupt an individual election, on a Statewide basis the popular will of the people can be subverted through the organisation of similar schemes in other electorates. Such practices strike at the very heart of democracy. They undermine public confidence that elections have been conducted in a free and fair manner. That is the legacy left to us by the ALP. That is why the coalition has brought this motion into the House tonight. We know that one way to help stop the fraudulent practices that led to the conviction of the ALP members in Townsville is to require proof of identity and residence before enrolling on the electoral roll. That is one way. We know that one way to help prevent corruption of an election as Ehrmann indicated occurred in Mundingburra is to require similar proof before a ballot paper is issued to an elector.

Rejection of the motion tonight gives the green light for these corrupt practices to continue. It says, "Go ahead." And I will address some of the comments by members opposite in a minute. It says that the ALP is happy to use an electoral system that cannot be trusted to produce an honest result. They are happy and content to proceed as usual because they are the beneficiary of the system. They are manipulating it for their own good. That is why they do not want any changes.

When we have a suspect electoral system we have a suspect Government, particularly if that Government refuses to move expeditiously to plug the loopholes that permit the electoral system to be abused. This is a charge that can be rightfully levelled against any Government that refuses, as I said, to respond in any substantial way to the corrupt practices that have been uncovered.

Let us get on to a few comments by the members for Yeronga and Sandgate. They seem to think that, trotting out old reports written before the ALP rotting in Townsville was uncovered, will be good enough to remedy the situation we have at the moment. That is not true. That simply says that they want to ignore what happened in Townsville and proceed on their merry way. Tonight's motion says that that is not good enough. We want a substantial change. We know what is in the old reports. That has proven to be not good enough; people have been able to get around it. What we have had is

a three blind mice scenario. The member for Logan, the member for Capalaba and the member for Brisbane Central—

Time expired.
