



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard 5 October 2000

MR SPEAKER'S RULING

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (9.23 p.m.): I second it.

Mr SPEAKER: You need a seconder.

Dr WATSON: I will second it. This is Labor's quid pro quo.

Mr SPEAKER: Did you second it?

Dr WATSON: Yes, I second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This is Labor's quid pro quo. The Speaker has been protecting the Government all week and now the Government is protecting the Speaker. This is a Government of the mates, by the mates, for the mates. It is as simple as that.

Mr Speaker, I must admit that I was amazed by some of your rulings this week, but perhaps the most amazing one was on the question that I asked the Deputy Premier yesterday—a very simple question. I asked the Deputy Premier whether he could inform the House if he has ever employed and, if so, in what capacity, Mr Lee Bermingham. That was not an issue that has been canvassed in the inquiry. It was not related to a question that had been canvassed in evidence in the inquiry but a simple question about whether or not an individual had been employed by the Deputy Premier. What happened? Mr Speaker ruled that out of order. That is funny because the Deputy Premier was apparently not only willing to answer it but also anxious to answer it. Later, when he was asked a question by the member for Lytton, despite the Speaker's ruling that it was sub judice, the Deputy Premier answered the question. He said—

"When I moved into the Ministry in 1992, Lee Bermingham was working in the Ministry."

At least the Deputy Premier confirmed the fact that he was working in the Ministry when he became Minister. He was working for the Goss Government. Of course, the Deputy Premier then tried to palm it off by blaming the member for Burnett, and he got that wrong.

Mr Davidson: He worked with them for two years since they have been in Government

Dr WATSON: He worked for them for two years since Labor has been in Government. The Deputy Premier tried to put it over to the member for Burnett. Then, of course, he realised that he got that wrong. So the Deputy Premier came back into the Parliament, in the middle of the Treasurer introducing Bills, and asked leave to correct his previous statement. Again, the Deputy Premier misled the Parliament. He corrected it by saying that it was not Doug Slack; it was actually Bruce Davidson's Ministry. Of course, that was wrong, too.

As the member for Toowoomba South said, all this was supposed to be sub judice.

Mr Borbidge: He has been talking to Joan Budd too much.

Dr WATSON: I am not quite sure if the Speaker has been talking to Joan Budd, but maybe the Deputy Premier has. So what we have in this situation is a question ruled out of order on the basis of sub judice, the Deputy Premier answering it in response to another question and his return into the Parliament to answer it yet again. In no case was any of that ruled sub judice.

Of course, it is no wonder that the Courier-Mail in its editorial today stated—

"... Opposition questions he had previously ruled were sub judice. If a question was sub judice, how can an answer to the question not be?"

That was a pretty reasonable conclusion to make. At the time, everybody in the House questioned that.

Of course, it was not just restricted to the Deputy Premier, we also had the Minister for Tourism making a similar kind of statement. When she was asked a question by the member for Caloundra, despite the fact that the question was ruled sub judice, the Minister for Tourism could not wait to get up and try to answer it. She even raised a point of privilege in order to do so. Again, that was referred to quite properly in the Courier-Mail today.

An Opposition member: She knew that the question wasn't out of order.

Dr WATSON: The Minister knew that the question was not out of order, and everyone else in the House knew that the question was not out of order. Everyone in the House knew that the questions to the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Tourism were reasonable. They were not sub judice. They should not have been ruled sub judice. Everyone in the gallery and everyone else knew that the Speaker of this House got it wrong.

That is why we are moving these dissent motions. We moved the dissent motions not because we want to come in here and have a debate on a Thursday night after a tough week, we moved them because we know that Mr Speaker should have known that it was wrong. In fact, Mr Speaker, you probably did know that it was wrong, but you were doing the bidding of the Government. Mr Speaker, that is the problem with the way in which you have gone about handling what has happened this week. Quite simply the problem is this: the ALP has corrupted the electoral roll, the ALP has corrupted the Electoral Commission and the ALP is now corrupting the Parliament.

Time expired.
