



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard 18 May 2000

CENSURE OF MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.09 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. This Minister has form. He has a track record of abusive and aggressive behaviour, particularly with a few beers under his belt. In just two years as Minister he has been implicated in at least three cases of Rocky rage.

Firstly, he abused a backflow contractor in the Strangers Bar. We all remember that. Then he threatened a fellow member of Parliament. Now he has king-hit the husband of a Federal Labor member. This was not a case of self-defence; it was a vicious assault occasioning bodily harm.

The Premier has not even tried to deny that the Minister king-hit Mr Brown with a beer can. He has not even tried to deny that the Minister threw the first punch, the last punch and everything in between. Yet he continues to maintain that the Minister acted in self-defence. The Premier wants us to believe that the Minister was defending himself against the bloke who did not swing a single punch. I have not heard anyone suggest anywhere that he threw a single punch. The Premier wants us to believe that it is okay for a Minister of the Crown to beat the living daylight out of those who cross their path.

The assault itself was bad enough, but the subsequent cover-up makes it pale into insignificance. The Premier has not even tried to deny that the Minister's staff lied to police. He has not even tried to deny that the Minister ducked a police interview. Yet the Premier continues to claim—

Mr Beattie: I'm happy to do that. I'm happy to do all of that.

Dr WATSON: The Premier had his chance during question time this morning. The Premier had his opportunities, and he has not done so.

Mr Beattie: You didn't ask me.

Dr WATSON: The Premier had plenty of time. During question time, he had to go back to 1976 to try to dredge up something. So the Premier should not tell me that he did not have time to make the denials.

The Premier continues to claim that this scandal is a personal matter and does not have any bearing on the Minister's fitness to serve as a Minister of the Crown. The Premier has not denied that the members of the ALP colluded to fabricate false evidence. He has not denied that the Minister's brother harassed witnesses. Yet the Premier continues to claim that the whole process was above reproach.

The Premier is treating this House with contempt. He is treating the people of Queensland with contempt. He is treating the rule of law and order with contempt. The Premier claims that this matter is at an end because Mr Brown withdrew his complaint. Nothing could be further from the truth. The real question is why Mr Brown withdrew his complaint. We believe that it is blackmail. We believe that the factional heavies got to Mr Brown and told him that his wife would get the chop if he did not toe the line. We believe that Mr Brown withdrew his complaint to save his wife from political assassination. The factional heavies applied the blowtorch and cut a deal—"You spare the Minister and we will spare your wife."

The Premier wants us to believe otherwise. He claims that there was no deal, no deal, no deal, but the evidence is mounting. This Premier has form. I ask members to remember what happened to Bob Gibbs. When "Bollinger Bob" became a liability for the Government, the Premier cut a deal: a one-way ticket to Hollywood, a \$920,000—

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. That comment is untrue. It is offensive and I seek that it be withdrawn.

Dr WATSON: The Premier cut an arrangement: a one-way ticket to Hollywood—

Mr SPEAKER: No, the member has to withdraw.

Dr WATSON: I withdraw. The Premier cut an arrangement: a \$920,000 lump sum and \$250,000 a year. I ask members to remember "The Phantom", Bill D'Arcy. The Premier admits that when Bill became a liability to the Government, he cut a deal: a \$700,000 lump sum, a special tax break of \$14,000 and a promise not to claw back his super.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. Those comments I find offensive and untrue, and I seek for them to be withdrawn.

Dr WATSON: I will withdraw, but the record shows that the Premier was claiming the credit for getting rid of Bill D'Arcy. We know the Premier cut a deal, because we know about the \$14,000 tax break.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments untrue and offensive, and I seek for them to be withdrawn.

Dr WATSON: I withdraw. The Premier did a deal down behind the cowshed at Bethany, that is for sure. He knows that.

Time expired.
