



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 9 November 2000

**MR SPEAKER'S RULING**

**Motion of Dissent**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.34 p.m.): I move—

"That Mr Speaker's ruling that Mr Beanland's question without notice to the Premier was sub judice be dissented from."

In rising to speak to this motion, I want to say that the Opposition will not be taking its full length of time. Although on 5 October the Government used the guillotine to handle by way of cognate debate some 10 dissent motions in a one-hour period, we are very much aware of the time.

This Government is simply rorting the system. This Attorney-General and this Government know exactly where the bodies are buried. This whole exercise is a cover-up of the highest degree.

**Mr Foley:** You're embarrassing.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I want to go through the history of this matter and show just how embarrassed this Government is. I invite members to listen to this. I would suggest that, as the member opposite did a fine job of putting his foot in it, he should keep quiet.

We should not forget that the Government moved to guillotine the debate on the motions of dissent because it was running scared. The Premier rushed out of the Chamber with his tail between his legs. On that last occasion he did not want to debate the dissent motions—no way, not all 10 of those dissent motions.

This issue is about protecting the AWU. The sub judice rulings come and go as the Speaker pleases. It is little wonder that the Opposition has been so appalled and shocked by his rulings. On so many occasions the Opposition has moved dissent motions to those rulings, because the Speaker moves that questions are sub judice willy-nilly to protect the AWU faction—a faction, I might say, of which he is a member. That is erratic decision making. It has nothing to do with any inquiry in another place.

I turn now to how this exercise panned out. Of course, the Beattie Labor Government is extremely sensitive when it comes to Mr Bermingham, and that is exactly what this issue is about. The question was simply asked in relation to Mr Bermingham. It was asked of the Premier—no-one else. Of course, on a number of occasions the Premier has indicated that he is extremely happy to answer all questions. He says, "I am always happy to answer these questions, being the generous soul that I am, a lovable person at heart." However, on this particular day a question was asked in relation to Mr Bermingham, and this time it was ruled sub judice.

I want to go through the list of questions that were asked in relation to Mr Bermingham that were ruled sub judice. That is very important, because it shows why the Opposition has moved dissent motions. On 4 October 2000, the member for Moggill asked the Deputy Premier whether he employed Mr Lee Bermingham. That question was ruled out of order on the grounds of sub judice. Yet on 17 October, the same question was asked of the Minister for Mines and Energy and was not ruled out of order. It was not ruled sub judice. The question was allowed.

Not only that, on 4 October, two questions after the question asked by the member for Moggill of the Deputy Premier, a Dorothy Dix question was asked of the Deputy Premier in which he was allowed to answer the member for Moggill's question. Accordingly, the Hansard shows that. Then we

had the ludicrous situation in which a question was asked of the Minister for Tourism and Racing by the member for Caloundra. That was also ruled out of order, yet the Minister rose from her seat and said that she had a matter of privilege that she wanted to raise. Despite the Speaker ruling the question out of order, the Minister proceeded to answer that same question on a matter of privilege. The Minister was not ruled out of order by the Speaker; she was allowed to answer the question.

Then on the same day the Parliament witnessed that shameful outburst by the member for Woodridge in which he went to great lengths to try to distance the Labor Party from distorting, cheating and corrupting the electoral rolls. I might add that, in answering the question, the Deputy Premier got the part about Mr Bermingham wrong and had to come back into the Parliament and correct the record. We had high farce in relation to the whole situation. Moreover, the member for Noosa had to then come back into the Chamber and correct the record, because the Deputy Premier still had it wrong. He had two goes, but he got it wrong twice.

The question to the Premier had nothing to do with any inquiry in another place or the Deputy Premier. In fact, my question simply asked the basic question—

"Can the Premier inform the House why his beloved ALP and the member for Woodridge were perfectly capable of investigating irregularities in union ballots but failed to show anything like the same expertise or enthusiasm for allegations of electoral corruption?"

I can well understand why the Premier wanted the Speaker's protection and this question was suddenly ruled out of order. He was suddenly unhappy to answer it, even though he had said he was happy to answer all of these questions. So we have the situation that questions are answered when it suits the faction and not answered when it does not. The Premier really has his tail between his legs when it comes to the issue and quite obviously he does not want to get further involved with Mr Bermingham.

The sub judice rulings handed out in this House have in fact been handed out in a very discriminatory fashion and, of course, Hansard is there for all and sundry to read. The Speaker is well aware of the erratic way in which these decisions are handed out. It is all about protection of the Government and protection of the AWU faction of the Labor party, the same faction that the Speaker is a member of. This is about, among other issues, protecting the Government in what is a very difficult time in relation to matters happening in another place. It is about protection of the AWU. I think I have shown that the rulings are not about sub judice but about protection of the Government, the cheating Government. It is about making decisions—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Would the member please keep to this dissent motion?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I certainly am. I am talking about this motion as I read it out—

**Mr SPEAKER:** You are not, really; you are talking about the history. If you would like to talk to this motion—

**Mr BEANLAND:** This is all about this particular question, a reference to Mr Bermingham which, Mr Speaker, you have ruled out of order on a number of occasions and allowed on a number of occasions.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am asking you to refer to this motion of dissent.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I certainly am. I can understand the reason why you are very unhappy about this matter being raised—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am not unhappy at all.

**Mr BEANLAND:**—because it calls into question your judgment. Mr Speaker, if you wish to come and join the debate you are welcome to do so, but you should not try to do that from the Speaker's chair. You are there to protect the members, as I have told you previously.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is a reflection on the Chair and I ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I do, Mr Speaker. I have indicated previously—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I have withdrawn. I have indicated previously—

**Mr SPEAKER:** And I ask you to keep to this dissent motion.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I am. Mr Speaker, I have indicated previously the reason why you should not be in the chair presiding over these debates. I think that is a fair comment which even you must take to heart, because you have participated on a number of occasions and you have done so again this evening. So it is quite clear what this is about. It is quite clear why the opposition has moved dissent from your ruling, Mr Speaker, because your rulings are most erratic; they do not follow a pattern. There is nothing sub judice about the question I asked. In fact, Mr Speaker, what you do continually is make things up as you go along. That is exactly what happens. In fact, there is an old saying in the Labor

Party—if all else fails, laugh it off. Mr Speaker, we understand what you mean by laughing it off, because you have endeavoured to do that with this issue, but it simply will not wash.

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