



Speech by

GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Hansard 5 September 2000

ELECTORAL FRAUD

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (6.28 p.m.): The motion moved by the honourable member for Moggill in this evening's debate really does put the honourable member for Indooroopilly and the honourable member for Burleigh in an awkward position, given that they are members of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, which has been asked by this House to investigate and report back to this Parliament by 14 November. I notice that the honourable member for Indooroopilly is on the speaking list, so I presume that he will be supporting the amendment that has been put forward by the Attorney-General!

The requirements that the honourable member for Moggill is asking for in his motion do not just talk about proof of identity; they talk about proof of address to get enrolled and proof of identity and address before a voter even gets to cast a vote at a polling booth. In my view, and in the view of both the Queensland Electoral Commissioner and the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, those requirements are certainly far too stringent. As we have heard the honourable member for Archerfield say, they certainly will go a long way to disfranchising voters.

I believe that this motion is really a bit of political opportunism. As the Attorney-General has said, we should be sitting down and allowing LCARC to get on with the review that it has been asked to undertake by this Parliament. This motion is nothing but grandstanding. If honourable members had read the report from LCARC, they would have seen a number of recommendations that were made on a bipartisan basis. It is in the best interests of the Parliament and the citizens of Queensland for us to sit down and take politics out of the way so that we can make voting in this State as proper as we possibly can.

Mr Horan: You don't sound very convincing, Gordon. Put a bit of heart into it.

Mr NUTTALL: The honourable member for Toowoomba South says that I do not have a lot of heart in what I am saying. Although none of us may be squeaky clean, people in glass houses should not necessarily throw stones. I have lived in this State for some 47 years, 32 of which was under a gerrymander that disfranchised hundreds of thousands of voters in this State—a gerrymander supported by the National Party and the Liberal Party. So the member should not tell me that I am not fair dinkum.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: One of the things that I do want to raise—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr NUTTALL: I have stirred them up now. I looked at the Electoral Commission's annual report to this Parliament for the 1997-98 year, which was released after the last State election. In that report I can find no adverse comment from the Electoral Commissioner about the conduct of the election in relation to the state of the electoral rolls. Indeed, the Electoral Commissioner made a number of comments about what happened in the State election—and I will not go into percentages or figures—such as it had the highest voter turnout, it had the lowest number of informal votes, there was the quick return of the writ, and there was a 140% increase in the number of telephone inquiries, a

record number of postal votes and a reduction in the cost of information, resulting in the highest number of electors and the highest number of candidates. In that report, the Electoral Commissioner was not saying that the election that was conducted in 1998 was done in an adverse way.

Indeed, I acknowledge that the Electoral Commissioner has written to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, but that was in response to what the coalition Commonwealth Government has done in terms of trying to make the States change the way in which people are to be enrolled on electoral rolls. Indeed, a number of the other States are not happy with what the Commonwealth is doing.

Time expired.
