



Speech by

GRANT MUSGROVE

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

Hansard 17 October 2000

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Mr MUSGROVE (Springwood—ALP) (11.40 a.m.): When the House last met, the member for Clayfield delivered an apology, or a one-minute correction, to the House with regard to the disclosure, or lack of disclosure, of donors to his campaign and his return to the Clerk of this Parliament in relation to his own pecuniary interests.

That statement was made after his personal explanation on 23 August when he claimed that "all disclosure requirements had been met". That was in response to my revelation that the member for Clayfield had not revealed the name or details of his Clayfield electorate staff account. In other words, the member deliberately misled the House, the Liberal Party and the Electoral Commission.

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive because I did not deliberately mislead the House. I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr MUSGROVE: I withdraw. The member for Clayfield has been caught red-handed, and after being smoked out over a period of months the best he could do was deliver a one-minute explanation in which he passed the buck to his campaign committee.

The House, and especially the member's own colleagues, will recall that he specifically denied that the Liberal Party had made a particular request regarding his fund-raising activities. That denial has been shown to be false and he has had to submit an amended return to the Liberal Party State Director.

Mr Elder: That must have hurt.

Mr MUSGROVE: That must have hurt. When I informed the former State Secretary of the Labor Party, Mike Kaiser, of this, he said that if anyone had been required to do that in the Labor Party that person would have been hung, drawn and quartered.

The member's statement on 3 October was—

"It has been brought to my attention that the committee's disclosure for 1998-99 did not include details of some fundraising activities undertaken after the accounts were finalised following the 1998 elections."

With the greatest respect, what a load of absolute codswallop! The member for Clayfield, in his usual manner of showing great loyalty to his friends and colleagues, is trying to blame his campaign committee instead of accepting any blame himself.

He has been caught out not once, but twice. Firstly, he did not disclose details of fundraising in his electoral return as required by the Electoral Act. Secondly, he did not disclose in his return to the Clerk of this Parliament and, I suspect, the Electoral Commission, the existence of the Clayfield staff account. Having been caught out, the member could not even bring himself to tell the correct story. In his statement to the House earlier this month he said that he had "voluntarily" included the Clayfield staff account in his pecuniary interest.

Mr Elder: Voluntarily!

Mr MUSGROVE: Indeed, voluntarily—like a rabbit in the spotlight. What a load of absolutely transparent rubbish! The member has been pursued and pursued and was ultimately forced to 'fess up. The member for Clayfield only included the staff account in an amended return after I exposed his failure to declare it, and after he was formally asked questions about it in this place.

The member for Clayfield ought to be condemned for trying to blame his poor long-suffering campaign workers, or his committee, when everyone—especially everyone in the Liberal Party—knows that he has quite tight personal control over his massive fundraising efforts. The proof of that is to be found in who signs the cheques on the Clayfield staff account. We have his city council stooge, Timothy Nicholls, and stockbroker Alan Pidgeon, who incidentally is a member of the Liberal Party in the Ryan electorate—on the other side of Brisbane from Clayfield.

Mr Mickel: What about the member from Beijing—on the other side of the world?

Mr MUSGROVE: Time will tell, but I am not aware of anyone from Beijing being a signatory to the account. The member should have spared his long-suffering campaign workers the blame. They have had to put up with him haranguing them for hours about how badly treated he has been at the hands of the Leader of the Liberal Party and how no-one appreciates just how wonderful he is for the Queensland division of the Liberal Party.

The truth is that the member for Clayfield has been well and truly caught out and exposed. What is his response? His response is a half-hearted apology to the House, passing the blame on to anyone else but himself. I invite all honourable members to have a look at the amended disclosure document because it is barely readable and raises far more questions than it answers.

On the day before the House last met the member for Clayfield lodged an amended return with the Clerk. All honourable members have to comply with the requirements for disclosure. We usually do it in a way that is transparent, open and accountable. The member for Clayfield's disclosure does not indicate much at all. All it indicates is that he has very poor handwriting. The document is barely readable.

We now know that the account is called the "Clayfield staff account" not the "Clayfield electorate staff account" and not the "Clayfield member's staff account". Anyone making out a cheque to this account would believe that it would not be disclosed. It has no political connotation whatsoever. After all, it could be the Clayfield school staff account or the Clayfield Bowls Club staff account. It appears to have no political link whatsoever.

Every member in this place has a team of supporters and a campaign committee. That is standard practice in the Labor Party. In terms of my own re-election, I can tell honourable members that cheques will be made out to the Springwood ALP. It will be transparent. I presume that the National Party and the Liberal Party in my area will adopt the same practice. Every member, except one, will follow this practice.

There is no doubt the Prime Minister of Australia was indeed spot-on when he issued the edict to stop Federal Ministers raising funds for the member for Clayfield. He took this action after receiving complaints from many Federal Ministers and candidates who were missing out as the member for Clayfield went around knocking off every available dollar for himself. The member for Clayfield has been bleeding his party dry simply to back his own factional candidates not only in public elections but in internal Liberal Party ballots.

It gives me no joy at all to report to the House that the member for Clayfield has still not been totally frank and honest. I understand he has yet another account—the functions account. The member for Clayfield's latest fundraiser is a breakfast with former New South Wales Premier Nick Greiner. The invitation to the function states that cheques should be made out to the "Greiner function", not to the Clayfield staff account. This is yet another device to hide funds—funds which ought to be disclosed.

Mr Elder: The Clayfield functions account?

Mr MUSGROVE: The Clayfield functions account indeed! I hope the member for Clayfield puts in another amended return and makes another apology to this House for yet another sneaky device to avoid proper political disclosure. Whenever he has a function the cheques are made payable to the so-and-so function.

Mr Elder: How much is in that functions account?

Mr MUSGROVE: I wonder how much is in that functions account. Cheques are to be made out not to the Liberal Party, not to the Clayfield Liberal campaign and not even to the recently disclosed staff account, but to the functions account! I challenge the member for Clayfield to put in a return to his party and to this Parliament—yet another forced disclosure and another example of his absolute contempt for the political process.

I ask also that the next time he makes a personal explanation he does not say silly things and attack me personally. He should not say, as he did on 23 August—

"... I totally and absolutely reject the defamatory and untrue innuendo contained in the member's statements ...

...

I urge the member for Springwood, for the sake of his credibility in Parliament and in the community, to refer"

it to the appropriate authorities. He described them as scurrilous assertions. He said also that these funds do not provide him with any pecuniary interest or advantage.

Time expired.
