



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR WARWICK

Hansard 9 November 2000

COOKE INQUIRY

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.35 p.m.): The Parliament has no choice but to support the motion moved by the member for Caloundra because it is quite evident that if the recommendations of the Cooke inquiry, as implemented by the coalition and withdrawn by the current Government, had been implemented much earlier it is quite possible that we would not have seen the endemic political corruption and cheating which we have seen permeating the Labor Party, the political arm of the union movement, over the past 10 years—or even longer—in Queensland.

It has been interesting to sit here and listen to members opposite speak about the important role of the union movement. The union movement has an important role. The union movement has had an extremely important role in this State and in this nation for more than a century. I recognise that, and I commend those people who have worked in the union movement for their achievements on behalf of working men and women in Queensland and in Australia. That is why the union movement will always, and should always, have an important and respected role in this nation and in this State.

It was also interesting to note that we have a lot of alienated workers out there as well. A lot of workers feel that their paid officials—those who are elected to represent them—are not representing the interests or the aspirations of grassroots unionists. I hear that a lot as I move around my electorate. People say to me, "The only time you see a lot of those people is when they turn up to collect the union dues. But when you have a genuine industrial problem, or difficulty with your employer, they are not there." That is an important lesson for the union movement.

If one considers the concerns that have been raised in the motion moved by the member for Caloundra, it is very clear that a number of provisions could have been implemented earlier which may have addressed the situation that we are experiencing in Queensland today. Marshall Cooke recommended that the rules of every industrial organisation should provide for an annual general meeting of members of the organisation at which resolutions binding on the committee of management can be carried. The coalition's industrial relations legislation—killed off by the Beattie Labor Government—put this recommendation in place.

Marshall Cooke also said that if such an annual general meeting takes the form of a meeting of elected delegates, then no more than 30% of the total number of delegates shall be full-time paid officials of the organisation. This is a commonsense proposition which was also killed off by the union-organised Government led by the member for Brisbane Central.

What about other issues such as the political objects fund which was put in place and which was killed off by the Beattie Government? Marshall Cooke was very keen to ensure that grassroots unionists had some degree of effective control over those who purported to represent them and some degree of democracy—something that those opposite who profess to believe in democracy do not really believe in when they have the chance to legislate for such things in Government. What happens as a consequence of the contempt which many of the paid officials of the union have demonstrated over the years? We have seen the political arm of the union movement indulge in such underhanded political activity that it has now led to an inquiry just across the way.

We have also seen desperation on the part of the Government. We saw that desperation today as the Government came into this place and sought to implicate the National Party in these sorts of

things. The member for Chermside stood up and spoke about ancient history. In 1992 he wrote to the Queensland Electoral Commission with a number of allegations against Doug Foggo. It was quite remarkable. We have some statutory declarations here which show that Doug Foggo actually enrolled at 32 Cranbourne Street, West Chermside, a month before the election. He also stayed there following the election. I table that statutory declaration.

With regard to the allegation that he was enrolled for the electorate of Lilley at the time of the 1992 Federal election, I can inform the House that he was actually enrolled for Petrie. The member for Chermside was asked, "Where is the letter to the Electoral Commission?" He said, "I can't find that. I am only a backbencher. I don't keep that sort of information." However, he had all the other information. He came in here and continued the pathological untruth telling that we have seen from that side of the Parliament.

Time expired.
