



Speech by

**Hon. PETER BEATTIE**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

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Hansard 17 October 2000

**CONFIDENCE IN MR SPEAKER**

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is now beyond dispute that the ALP has routinely corrupted the electoral roll. The Shepherdson inquiry has also been told that the ALP corrupted the Electoral Commission. Now we find that the ALP has effectively corrupted the Parliament of Queensland.

The Speaker has applied his rulings with a capricious partisanship that has belied any semblance of political impartiality. He has actively conspired with the ALP to shield Labor members from the blowtorch of public scrutiny. We have seen him day in, day out looking to the Treasury benches for direction on how to treat the coalition's questions. It comes as no surprise to anyone in this House that the Speaker is a key member of the Deputy Premier's team in the corrupt AWU faction. This is not the first time the Speaker has shown his political colours. In June, we revealed that the ALP was using his office as a campaign headquarters for the Government Whip and member for Chermside, another member of the AWU faction.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** There is absolutely no question. We have got it. The ALP's list of Labor candidates showed that the Whip's campaign director was none other than the Speaker's office manager, Stirling Hinchliffe. The document we released at that time showed that Mr Hinchliffe had been running this campaign out of the Speaker's office for at least six months.

**Mr Elder:** You are pathetic.

**Dr WATSON:** That is what their documents show. Mr Hinchliffe was caught red-handed. He was caught out using the office phone, the office mobile, the office fax machine and the office computer for party political business on the taxpayers' time, at taxpayers' expense. Without any other consideration, those actions alone constituted a gross contempt of this Parliament and a blatant misuse of publicly funded resources.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** We released them at the time. There it is, out of the Government's own ALP records. There it is: the telephone number—work and home—the mobile number, the fax, the email. They are all there in their own documents.

The political neutrality of the Speaker's Office is one of the cornerstones of our democracy. It is a fundamental principle of this Parliament. Mr Hinchliffe crossed the line and should have been sacked on the spot, but the Speaker refused to act. In fact, he went in to bat for his factional lackey. He took the view that a little bit of corruption did not matter when the Government had the numbers. Given the growing mountain of evidence against AWU operatives, we cannot discount the possibility that Mr Hinchliffe may have been engaging in suspect activities similar to those being investigated. We have to recognise the possibility that the Speaker's office may have been used for the purposes of electoral corruption. That might at least explain the Speaker's heightened sensitivity on this particular subject.

**Mr Elder:** This is just an absolute disgrace.

**Dr WATSON:** It involved phone numbers, mobile numbers and email.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I find those words about the Speaker's office being used for those purposes offensive and I ask you to withdraw, because it is a reflection on the Speaker.

**Dr WATSON:** Mr Speaker, if you find them offensive, I will withdraw. However, I said that you have to recognise the possibility. I did not say that you are or were involved.

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** It is important. Which members of the AWU faction are clean? Those questions are legitimate public questions, particularly when they concern the institution of this Parliament. Whatever the extent of Mr Hinchliffe's conduct, it was clearly conducted on behalf of the AWU faction of the ALP with the full support of the Speaker himself. This goes to the very heart of our democratic process.

On the last day of sittings earlier this month, we saw the Government protecting the Speaker as he had protected it. We saw the Leader of the House use the ALP's numbers in the House to rip up Standing Orders and gag debate on a long list of individual dissent motions arising from a full week of arbitrary and capricious rulings made without neither rhyme nor reason.

The Government has good reason to protect this particular Speaker. He has a long track record of protecting Labor members. He has a long track record of acting as the Government's gatekeeper on matters of legitimate concern and privilege—matters that should have been referred to the relevant parliamentary committees for bipartisan consideration and adjudication. He has a long track record of relying on the Government's numbers to uphold his rulings in favour of the Government.

It has been a very long time since the Queensland Parliament was subverted by a more compliant, more partisan, more biased Speaker. This Speaker is a throwback to the bad old days of the "moonlight State".

Time expired.

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (6.14 p.m.): I rise to oppose the motion, and I do so with some degree of sadness because tonight we have seen the most disgraceful—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker, here they go again. They have set out to disrupt the Parliament. There has been a clear strategy. Here they go. Listen to them; they are disrupting the Parliament. In the past two sitting weeks, they have attempted on every occasion to bring this Parliament into disrepute.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here we go. Listen to the interjections. I say to the people of Queensland tonight: listen to the Opposition seeking to scream and hail down Government Ministers who cannot even get an opportunity to speak in this House. Mr Speaker, is it little wonder that the Opposition is seeking to disrupt your office here? They are doing it for crude political purposes.

Mr Speaker, what we saw tonight from the Leader of the Opposition was a cowardly attack on you as Speaker and it was done simply for crude political purposes to not only bring this House into disrepute but also to try to use this House for crude political purposes, and that is all.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here they go again. The Leader of the Opposition is interjecting.

**Mr Beanland** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Indooroopilly!

**Mr BEATTIE:** I sat here and listened in silence to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here they go again. I cannot even be heard.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gregory will cease interjecting.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The Opposition's performance is so bad in this House—listen to them; we cannot even hear ourselves think. Listen to them; they are at it again on every occasion. We cannot even hear ourselves think in this debate. They are interjecting. They have come in here and they have chanted. They have had a deliberate strategy—

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here they go again, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Western Downs will cease interjecting.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Let the record show that the Opposition is disrupting and trying to bring the House into disrepute. Let the record show that through this—

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here we go. The member for Toowoomba South is bringing the House into disrepute. Let the record show that at every occasion the member for Toowoomba South again—

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Toowoomba South will cease interjecting. That is my final warning.

**Mr BEATTIE:** They simply try to cry down Government Ministers because they do not want to let them speak. They are trying to censor our contribution in this Parliament. They are trying to stop the Government—

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide will cease interjecting. That is my final warning.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Whether it is the member for Callide, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party—the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to lead on these issues. When Speaker Turner was in that chair, I had discussions with him—

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. Unlike the Premier, I have never accused him of thieving public funds—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr BORBIDGE:**—and he talks about standards!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. Resume your seat.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** He should look in the mirror—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. Resume your seat.

**Mr BORBIDGE:**—and see what he is doing to this place.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here he is again. The Leader of the Opposition is bringing the Parliament into disrepute.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here they go. They are interjecting, crying down Government Ministers. The Leader of the Opposition takes—

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I now warn the member for Callide under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Let the people of Queensland know that this Opposition has had a deliberate strategy to wreck this Parliament. It has had a deliberate strategy—

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Warwick will cease interjecting.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here they go—the Deputy Leader of the National Party. Every time Ministers get to their feet members opposite seek to bring this Parliament into disrepute.

**Mr Quinn:** Say something of substance.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Merrimac will cease interjecting.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have already warned the member for Callide under Standing Order 123A. You will now leave the Chamber under Standing Order 123A(3), which means you can come back to vote. Remove yourself.

Whereupon the honourable member for Callide withdrew from the Chamber.

**Mr BEATTIE:** There is no substance to this whinge from the Opposition. That is the truth. The whole debate has centred around the fact that the Opposition has sought to disrupt this Parliament. In terms of media coverage of this Parliament, I think it is about time that we heard both sides of the story, not just the story of the attacks on you, Mr Speaker. Let us have some fairness in the reporting on how the Opposition has deliberately pursued a strategy to wreck the Parliament of Queensland. Let us have some fair reporting. We have had none.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Warwick! That is my final warning.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here we go. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is seeking to wreck my contribution. Mr Speaker, let us be really clear about this. You have simply ruled the way that Speaker Turner did. Did we accept what Speaker Turner did? Yes, we did. Did we seek to go out and wreck the Parliament? No, we did not! We accepted the umpire's decision. The Leader of the Opposition will never accept the umpire's decision. All he will seek to do is to wreck this Parliament. I will be telling the people of Queensland from one end of the State to the other that the Leader of the Opposition is nothing but a wrecker of this Parliament.

**An Opposition member:** Time's up.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Here we go. Let the record show the disruption of my speech.

Time expired.

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