



Speech by  
**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN**  
**MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE**

---

Hansard 17 October 2000

**CONFIDENCE IN MR SPEAKER**

**Mr SULLIVAN** (ChermSIDE—ALP) (6.50 p.m.): What we have seen with this motion is a political stunt by an Opposition that has no regard for the traditions of Parliament and no respect for the parliamentary process.

If Opposition members truly had no confidence in Mr Speaker when they moved the motion last sitting week, they would have debated the motion then and there. How can they say that they have no confidence in the person running the Parliament when they continue with other legislation, another 6 o'clock debate, another day's sitting and only now bring on the debate.

Their actions speak louder than their words. Their actions show that this most serious of actions in the Westminster tradition has been taken light-heartedly by a flippant and disrespectful Opposition. This no confidence motion is just a political stunt. It is a cynical and cheap act by a weak and morally bankrupt Opposition. Their mock indignation is shown to be the fraudulent facade that it is by their decision to hold this debate 12 days after their supposed grievance.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers to this debate, this is the first time that a motion of no confidence in the Speaker has been debated in the Queensland Parliament. Members of the press gallery have long memories and they can recall the dark days of parliamentary practice under Joh Bjelke-Petersen, yet even in Joh's day when the Parliament was considered a laughing-stock among Australian Parliaments and when successive Speakers were under Joh's thumb, no Labor Opposition moved a motion of no confidence. Successive Labor Oppositions that suffered under Bjelke-Petersen's oppressive handling of the democratic process still retained sufficient respect for the parliamentary process to the extent that they did not move this strongest of procedural motions.

At no time during the 33 years of oppressive National/Liberal Party Governments did the Labor Opposition stoop to the low level that we see today with the Borbidge/Watson/Springborg coalition. This coalition is a disgrace. Its members have no respect for the Parliament and no respect for the serious disrepute into which they hope to draw this 49th Parliament. If we had any doubt about that, their efforts tonight emphasise their lack of respect.

The basis of moving this motion relates to Mr Speaker's application of the sub judice convention. Let us look closely at that convention and at how Speaker Hollis applied it. As explained by previous speakers in this debate, Speaker Fouras took legal advice from Crown Law and explained to the House how the sub judice convention would be applied in the Parliament. Speaker Turner, from the following National Party Government, applied this convention in exactly the same manner. Members of the press gallery will recall that when a former Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee considered this issue, the Premier of the day, the member for Surfers Paradise, Rob Borbidge, gave his support for the way in which the sub judice convention had been applied by Speakers Fouras and Turner. Yet when Speaker Hollis applied this convention in exactly the same manner, the morally deficient coalition tried to defy Mr Speaker and acted to disrupt the House. Simply to gain a political advantage and to score short-term political points, the Borbidge/Watson/Springborg Opposition changed its tune. It did its parliamentary backflip. This coalition Opposition has no regard for the conventions of Parliament. Its members operate from the basest principles of expediency and political grandstanding. They believe that they are born to rule and that they can defy and ignore rules when and where they choose.

As Whip, from where I sit here in the Chamber I could see the sustained disruption of proceedings by the Opposition. We saw the same format of questions asked by the Opposition members, knowing that they were contravening the sub judice convention that had been spelt out by previous Speakers and reiterated by the current Speaker. We witnessed the coordinated calling out by members opposite to disrupt question time at a time when the cameras were rolling. We knew that they

were here for a performance, for an act, for a charade. We knew that they wanted to disrupt the Parliament and they acted that way. We saw the cowardly calling out from behind hands to disrupt Mr Speaker when he was already speaking to another member opposite who had been calling out.

I am sad to say that the member for Southport tonight really disappointed me. I did not think that I would see him playing the man in that way. I think it is a sad day for the member for Southport.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Southport will withdraw those words. They are unparliamentary.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I withdraw.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I think that Mr Veivers—

Time expired.

---