



Speech by

**VAUGHAN JOHNSON**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Hansard 5 October 2000

#### **MR SPEAKER'S RULING**

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (10.17 p.m.): It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise to speak in this Chamber tonight on the Leader of the Opposition's motion of dissent against your ruling, Mr Speaker. One point that I wish to emphasise is this Government's inability to recognise what it is all about—accountability. This Government came to power two years ago on a platform of accountability. It was a platform that the Premier still boasts about in the streets and through the media outlets in Queensland. He continually tells us in this Parliament what he sees is right and what he sees is wrong.

It seems to me that there are two sets of rules in this Parliament—one for the Government side and one for the Opposition side. For too long we have had Speakers presiding over this Parliament who have one eye for one side of the Chamber and a different eye for the other side of the Chamber. If we took a leaf out of the book of the former member for Nicklin this would be a great Parliament again. The former member for Nicklin had a fair and equitable administration as Speaker of this House.

I echo the words of the member for Crows Nest, Mr Speaker, when I say that you would be wise to walk around this building and speak to some of the fine men and women who work within the confines of this institution and see how low is the morale in this place. That has to be an indictment on your leadership and your responsibility for looking after the precincts of this great institution.

We have to ensure that we bring accountability back into this place—the accountability that it deserves. The most important factor is to make sure that members on this side of the House receive fair treatment during question time. It is important that we receive answers to our questions. Our questions should not be gagged.

We have seen the gag applied 26 times this year to very important legislation such as the Water Bill, the Vegetation Management Bill and the Dairy Bill. These are important pieces of legislation that govern how we are going to promote and grow our primary industries in this State. It is the productivity of our primary industries that keeps people in jobs in the metropolitan areas of this State.

The members of this House must be able to act as legislators in a fair and equitable manner. We have an elected Government. However, we are not too sure how it was elected. There seems to have been a fair amount of cheating. Each day we learn more and more about this entrenched cheating.

There seems to be a blatant attempt to put in place your policy of shut-down, Mr Speaker. The Opposition will not wear a policy of shut-down. Our role is to be a good alternative Government in Opposition. We are endeavouring to do that as part of the democratic process. The people in the electorate are looking on this evening. They have been looking on all week. They read the Courier-Mail, they watch television and they listen to the news. I have to say to you, Mr Speaker: it is a situation that is totally unacceptable.

The other thing that I want to say here this evening is that this type of intimidation and pressure seems to be a common problem for Labor, but a Speaker in this Parliament represents the interests of Parliament first, not the pleadings of a Government keen to escape the accountability that it fraudulently professes to embrace.

I have to say to you, Mr Speaker, that this is the Parliament of Queensland that has had the 89 of its members duly elected by the people of Queensland. It is not H Division of Pentridge jail. We can

draw two comparisons. We are free people who are elected by the people of Queensland to be the legislators for the people of Queensland. We are not criminals in an institution who need a fair go. We need a fair go so that we can express the needs and the wishes of the people of Queensland.

I say to you, sir, as the custodian of the House that it is time we had that fair and equitable outcome and I hope and pray that from here on in you will abide by the rulings of the Constitution of this State.

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