



Speech by

**Hon. K. LINGARD**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

---

Hansard 4 April 2001

**STATE SCHOOLS, POLITICAL MATERIAL**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (7.12 p.m.): On Thursday, 22 March the member for Robina asked the Minister for Education why she did not stop the Queensland Teachers Union sending out a brochure with the newsletters for all students of those principals who agreed to it. The minister replied by saying—

... this was a pamphlet devised, written and distributed by the Queensland Teachers Union. It sought to distribute the pamphlet through schools. The decision as to whether or not the leaflet would be distributed was a decision made by schools.

Then she replied—

This is exactly the same set of circumstances that prevailed when David Kemp sought to distribute material ...

Maybe that is a very clever answer, and obviously it raised a few laughs within the House. However, I would subtly suggest to the minister and to all government members that if that attitude is allowed to continue, sooner or later we are going to have a real problem within our schools. Here we have newsletters, which are an important part of a school's life. A newsletter is expected to be taken home by the students, and some schools would regard it as compulsory that the newsletter is definitely taken home to all parents. In fact, some students would be disciplined if they did not take it home.

Sooner or later we are going to have a political situation in which a school principal may perhaps have an incumbent politician who he believes has not done a great lot of work for the school and a challenger who says that he will do a great lot for the school if elected. What is that principal going to do? Is he going to allow that candidate's brochure to be taken home, pinned to all of the newsletters? Is he going to allow Woolworths to start to advertise through the newsletters and attach to the newsletters these brochures?

Whilst the answer of the Minister for Education might have been quite funny, it certainly does not allow the situation to be controlled within the schools. If you were a principal of a school that was making a decision, imagine what you would have to do. You have to go to the P&C association and ask them about each particular brochure. These political brochures supposedly should be allowed to be sent home attached to a newsletter if the principal agrees and if the school agrees. You have to have a staff who are all on side with the political decision to send home a brochure which is political. You are going to have to look at the principal's attitude. You are then going to have to sit down and decide whether the Queensland Teachers Union has supplied all the pamphlets. Someone has to sort them out. Someone has to sit there at the school machine and staple all of these to the newsletter—and do not tell me that that is not going to cost money. That is going to be Education money, and the staples are not going to come from some sort of funding. You are going to have the teachers handing them out and then, more importantly, you are going to have students taking home these political brochures—and remember now that we have many students in our schools who are of voting age; they are over 18. What are you going to say? Are you going to say it is definitely compulsory to take it home?

Time expired.

---