



Speech by

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Hansard 20 March 2001

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.54 a.m.): I have pleasure in seconding the nomination of Ray Hollis as Speaker. Ray is the seventh Speaker I have served under in this parliament. One thing I have observed in the time I have been a member of parliament is that the job of Speaker is probably one of the hardest jobs in the parliament. As the Premier alluded to, quite often the government, whether it is our side or the other side, believes that the Speaker is too fair, in other words, giving the opposition too good a go, and the next day the Speaker is being abused by the opposition for being too fair to the government, in other words, for not giving the opposition a go. That makes it very difficult to sit in that chair and make the decisions that are necessary.

One thing that I have observed that makes a good Speaker is that the Speaker needs to take control of the House, make his or her decisions, let members know that the decisions made are going to stand and not tolerate members who want to argue with that decision. Quite often members argue with the Speaker and the Speaker argues with them. I think the Speaker should make a ruling and simply move on. If the member wants to argue about that ruling, they should see the Speaker at lunchtime and talk about it then. In saying that, I tell members that in the 23 years that I have been here I have been warned under standing order 123A only once. So I observe what I am saying. I have never argued with the Speaker. Members need to respect the authority of the chair. That is the only way we are going to have the authority that is necessary to make that position work. I say this to whomever is elected Speaker today: if you want to have a good time as the Speaker, take control of the parliament early and let members know that you are going to run it very firmly but very fairly. If you do that, you will gain the respect of members. If whomever is elected Speaker does that, it will be a much better parliament to be in.

The past two parliaments have been very difficult for the Speaker. In both of those parliaments, the numbers were so close that the Speaker was reluctant to ask members to leave the chamber because he would be accused of being biased because of the numbers. That is not the position in this parliament. It is no longer of concern that ejecting a member will change the numbers. That in itself will make the Speaker's job that much easier. I look back at the parliaments I served in before the past two parliaments and make those observations from there. There are two members in the parliament besides the member for Redcliffe who have served as Speaker. I am sure that they would both agree with me when I say that their job in the chair is a lot easier if members respect their position. Finally, I never want to correct the Premier, but I draw to the House's attention that there are 27 female Labor members and 33 female members of parliament, which places this parliament third in the world for the number of female members. I congratulate all those women.
