



Speech by

**Mr R. QUINN**

**MEMBER FOR ROBINA**

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Hansard 7 November 2002

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

#### **Motion of Dissent**

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (11.15 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I rise to join in the debate on the motion of dissent against your ruling. In doing so I shall quickly go back through the events of the day last Thursday when the events in question occurred. There was a division called by the member for Moggill, quite within the standing orders. Quite rightly, Mr Speaker, you called the division and the votes were taken. At 10.29 the Minister for Emergency Services resumed his ministerial statement and did so for another short period of time until Dr Watson, the member for Moggill, rose to a point of order and mentioned the fact that under sessional orders 10.30 is the time for question time to commence. The member pointed out that according to the clock the time was 10.31.

Mr Speaker, you then allowed the minister to continue his ministerial statement by saying that the result of the division was that the minister could make his statement and you allowed the minister to continue. After another short period of time, the member for Moggill again rose and said that there had been no change to the standing orders and pointed out that we were governed by the standing orders or the sessional orders and that no-one had moved any amendment or motion before the House to the sessional orders. As we all understand, that is the only way in which the sessional orders of the House can be changed—by a motion before the House. Question time begins at 10.30.

Mr Speaker, you allowed the minister to continue his statement until the Leader of the Opposition again pointed out the sessional orders and, according to *Hansard*, at approximately 10.31 the member for Beaudesert rose to move a motion of dissent. We have debated reasons why in fact the ministerial statement was allowed to continue past 10.30 as recorded in *Hansard*. The Premier is saying that in fact you, Mr Speaker, are the judge of the time. Whilst the clock might say 10.31 or 10.32, you in fact are the final arbiter of the time. I would contest that assumption of the Premier. I think that the clocks are here for all members of parliament to adjudge when question time starts and when question time finishes. I understand that because on the day I talked to David Watson, the member for Moggill, about whether or not he ought to stand up and mention sessional orders and state that question time should commence at 10.30, I in fact looked at both clocks and they were different.

It is incumbent upon the people who run this House to make sure that in fact times are the same. It is no use members at this end of the House looking at the clock and presuming that question time should start and members at the back of the House looking at another clock and seeing a different time. That is not good practice in terms of the running of this House and leads to some of the situations that we find at present.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr QUINN:** Irrespective of whether it is a minister of the Crown making a ministerial statement or a backbench member or member on this side of the House making a private member's statement, question time should start at 10.30. We should not be accusing one side or the other of allowing it to run over in their favour. Question time should start at 10.30 and there is no reason it should not, because it is required under the standing orders and the sessional orders. When it does not happen, we find ourselves in this situation.

I note that the clocks have been coordinated tonight, which is a good start. Now that the clocks are coordinated, there is an expectation that when 10.30 arrives question time will start. The member will be required to resume his seat, no matter whether it is a minister or a backbench member, and question time will start. That I think is good form for the House. It negates this type of debate. Whilst I agree with all your rulings, Mr Speaker, up until that point in time we were going by one clock and although that clock was the clock in front of you at that time I would have expected, as I said, all clocks to be synchronised. I would have expected that you would have then called question time at that time. It is on that basis that I dissent from your ruling. Mr Speaker, it is on that basis that I agree with this dissent motion.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** There are different clocks in the House. But the fact of the matter is that they ought to all be telling the same time. The fact that they do not gives rise to these occasions. It is on that basis, Mr Speaker, that I dissent from your ruling.