



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 27 November 2003

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.31 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the government, I congratulate you on your election and I pledge that we will work with you with the usual degree of enthusiasm during this term. I have to say I welcome a ballot. I think in a democracy that is a good thing. It is very rare for a Speaker to get over two-thirds of the vote. I congratulate him on that, and he did it last time, too. In fact, when you look back, it is very impressive for a Speaker to get more than two-thirds of the vote in a contest on two occasions. So, Mr Speaker, you have a very impressive track record.

Mr Speaker, I should say that this is a very important institution, as we all know. Our behaviour and conduct in this place is on public display on every occasion. It saddens me and I know it saddens all members of this House—if it does not, it should—that politicians are not held in as high regard as they should be in the community, because we all know regardless of our political differences we work very hard for the people we serve—the people who elect us. It is therefore important and incumbent on all of us that we are on our best behaviour in this House. There does need to be a robust process in here, particularly in question time, and I would not want to see it any other way. But there are many ways that you can handle robust debate. The most important is to do it with a dignified and constructive approach, and that is what I would urge all members to do. I know all members of the government will certainly be pursuing that.

Mr Speaker, as I half-jokingly said in my nomination speech, you have been a very fair Speaker and on many occasions I jokingly said 'too fair'. I believe you are fair. I believe in a parliament where the government does have 63 seats that it is important that you do demonstrate that fairness which you have done in the last two terms and I know you will in this term as well. So can I pledge our loyalty and support to you. On behalf of the government, I look forward to working with you with some enthusiasm. Congratulations. Well done!