



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 25 May 2005

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (6.12 pm): The previous speaker should dig himself a big hole and bury himself because he was so far off the planet on a number of points. First of all, Speaker Turner did comply with the guidelines. He introduced them. They were published and they are available. Speaker Hollis has not complied with the guidelines and the apologists on the government benches are saying, 'It is okay because we didn't know about it.' The opposition's motion is seeking to have this matter dealt with by the parliament by referring it to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. The previous speaker has not even read the motion because he said that we want to refer this matter to the executive. My word! If he truly cared about the rules and the standing of this House, he should have at least read the motion of the Leader of the Opposition.

The CMC has said that there are certain matters that are up to the parliament to determine. When the opposition sought to have these matters referred, through the Acting Speaker, to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee we found that the powers were not available to the Acting Speaker to do so. At first we sought to dissent from that decision but we understood that his ruling was in fact correct. It is up to the whole parliament to deal with this issue and the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, with the responsibilities that are available to it, should determine the matter.

The Crime and Misconduct Commission has advised that the failure to comply with the guidelines does not amount to official misconduct unless it can be constituted a criminal offence. A breach of the guidelines is not a criminal offence. The Premier himself knew this to be case even before he referred the matter to the CMC. Section 90 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 charges the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee with responsibility for the ethical conduct of members and parliamentary powers, rights and immunities. That is why we are seeking to have the matter of Speaker Hollis's breach of guidelines referred to this committee.

It is disappointing to hear Labor MPs laughing and joking about this issue as if it is some trite, insignificant matter. They are so comfortable that they were laughing and joking in this chamber and ridiculing the raising of this issue. We are saying that it is a serious issue that this parliament has a responsibility to deal with. Ministers of the Crown have gone to jail for mispending a few thousand dollars of their ministerial allowances. It is interesting that when the law was applied to them Labor MPs were critical. We are saying that if people do something wrong they should pay the penalty. But there is a double standard in this parliament.

We see Labor backbenchers laughing and joking as if the allegations against Speaker Hollis are somehow trite and not worthy of consideration by the relevant bodies, one of those being the parliament. I am quite frankly amazed at the comfort they take in their significant majority. They think they are not responsible to the public or to the parliament, and that brings this place into disrepute. It is not only the actions of Speaker Hollis that have brought this parliament into disrepute but also the behaviour of Labor members during this debate in the parliament tonight. That will taint them beyond the debate tonight. We will not forget the way they have behaved or the way they have trivialised these serious issues to do with Speaker Hollis's expenditure. Questions need to be answered not only in other bodies but also in this

parliament because responsibility for moral and ethical issues and the conduct of this parliament is vested in the parliament and it should take these issues seriously. I am quite frankly disgusted with the actions and behaviour of Labor members who think that because they have the numbers they can railroad us on this matter and bury the responsibilities of this parliament.

Time expired.