



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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MR SPEAKER

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of this motion. I wish to deal with the Premier's contribution first. I think the Premier said that this is the rudest opposition that he has ever heard. I put it to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the people of Queensland would remember that they have heard him say this about every opposition we have had from Borbidge to Horan. I know because I read it in the paper. He would always say that. When he is desperate for things the Premier would say, 'They are the rudest ever,' whether it was Borbidge, Horan or Springborg. He is like the boy who cries wolf: after a while the message does not ring true, just as it does not ring true about this state having the best health system.

As for the comment that opposition members do not show proper respect to the Speaker when they leave, I call that an untruth. I have not seen anyone from this side of the benches who does not show proper respect to the Speaker when they leave this chamber.

In the wake of the fiasco that ultimately led to the former Speaker Ray Hollis resigning from this place, I could understand that a quick solution was required. But even by the Premier's standards, the shotgun decision to nominate the current Speaker was ill-conceived. I would also like to note the absolute hypocrisy with which his contribution was laced about the opposition playing stupid politics every day. His government has asked three questions without notice in the last sitting weeks about Liberal and National Party preselections.

The current Speaker of the House has overseen a brief but brutal reign as the House's umpire. The myriad decisions he has made that go against convention and practice in this place make it clear that he is unfit to sit in the Speaker's chair. In the 16 sitting days that the current Speaker has overseen, 121 warnings have been issued—113 of these warnings were issued to opposition members and just six were issued to government members. What a disgrace! If any member actually believes that the breakdown of warnings that I just mentioned is indicative of the number of opposition interjections in proportion to those made by government members, then they would do well to open their ears when they are sitting in this House. Last week alone there were 12 opposition warnings as opposed to just one warning for government members. But last week was even worse than usual because the Speaker managed to kick someone out of this chamber without even warning that person.

There are three terminal problems that make the current Speaker's position untenable. The first reason is the disgraceful display in kicking out the member for Charters Towers during the last sitting week. The second reason is the heavy-handed application of warnings to opposition members. The third reason why this Speaker cannot go on with the respect of this side of this House is his flagrant ignorance of standing orders that dictates how he oversees debate in this House and his inability to properly implement standing orders.

We all know that the Speaker is fairly green in his job—he has only been in it for 16 sitting days—but there is no excuse for making a reflection on a member of this place when the Speaker is occupying the Speaker's chair. During question time in the last sitting week when the Speaker booted the member for Charters Towers from this place—without warning him, I remind the House—the member for Mansfield,

always ready with a quip, decided to chime in and the Speaker agreed with his words. I refer members to *Hansard* where the Speaker said, 'That's right.' There you have it. That is clear evidence that this Speaker is going against all convention of being an independent referee. That display from the Speaker is so outrageous that I really need to say no more. What a disgrace!

I have already indicated the stark contrast in the number of warnings that have been issued to opposition members against the minuscule number of warnings issued to government members. When we were at the regional parliament in Rockhampton the member for Beaudesert, a former Speaker and someone who would know the standing orders, asked the Speaker to rule on relevance under standing order 118(b) about a response from Minister Mickel. That is a fairly simple and fair inquiry. This is how it was met. The Speaker said—

Order! I have made it perfectly clear since I have been the Speaker of this parliament that members ask questions in silence and it is up to the minister how they answer ...

What is the point of having a relevance clause when the Speaker is not prepared to act on it? I think that the basic principle of all this is that the Speaker is inconsistent in his application of the standing orders. He applies standing order 253 to a draconian extent but often ignores speaking in the first person and, worse, refuses to recognise points of order about these standing orders. This then leads to his deputies, on the roster of deputy speakers, also not recognising points of order.

In the last sitting week there was another example. The member for Indooroopilly, as a deputy speaker, allowed the health minister to address the member for Moggill by his name. When I pointed this out under standing order 244, it was ruled that there was no point of order and led to the Minister for Health haranguing me about being a new boy in this place and that I should go to my side and get some lectures about the standing orders. Meanwhile, the member for Indooroopilly was happy to point out that on another occasion I have walked between him and the Speaker. So he is happy to apply some standing orders but not all. That is the frustration that we have on this side of the House.

In conclusion, standing order 244 makes it clear that all members should be named only by their electoral district. In spite of points of order from me and other members, the Speaker has persisted in naming members by their name in reference to school groups coming to this place. I commend the motion to the House.

Time expired.