



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 29 November 2006

---

### CENSURE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.07 pm): We have to look at why the government has moved this motion and ask: is it factual and is it reasonable? We have been limited when discussing why it is not factually based because of the rulings that the Speaker has made with regard to the register of pecuniary interests. We also know that this is in fact totally unreasonable.

The Premier protesteth too much. He is not interested in the rights and privileges or the standing of this parliament. He is interested only in his own image. He saw the television last night and he did not like what he saw so he thought they would have a stunt and move a motion of censure against the Leader of the Opposition and use their extraordinary numbers—59 out of 89 members—to push it through. It will be seen for what it is—a tactic.

If we put this to the reasonableness test we will see that this Labor government never moved a motion of censure against Gordon Nuttall. In fact, they recalled the parliament and moved special legislation to wipe his slate clean of his sins. Then they went further. They changed legislation that had stood the test of time for 100 years to make it legal to lie to parliament.

We have to look at this motion before the House where the leader of the government, Peter Beattie, has moved a censure motion against the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier is simply pulling a stunt. Those opposite have no respect for the real standards of this place and the fact that this is a House of debate. We need to bring issues of concern to the parliament.

There are many issues of concern about the whiff of corruption in this Beattie Labor government. We know that there are issues that are currently being investigated by the CMC surrounding former minister Gordon Nuttall and we understand that there are issues that are currently before the ethics and privileges committee which we are not allowed to discuss because of the ruling in that regard.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Maroochydore, I ask you to resume your seat. You indicate that I have ruled that they are not to be discussed because of my ruling. The ruling was specifically in terms of the standing order which all of the members of this House have agreed to. If you wish to change that standing order, it is up to you as a member of parliament to bring that up. So I would ask you to respect that my ruling was pertaining to standing order 271 and it is clear in that standing order.

**Miss SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the previous debate over 12 months ago the matters were also before the ethics and privileges committee, but I understand that with regard to this issue currently before the ethics and privileges committee there is a ruling that you are referring to in the standing orders and we cannot refer to that particular matter. Where is the reasonableness test? When this government gets into trouble and when its integrity is brought into question, it pulls a stunt and takes the time of this parliament when there are many other issues before the parliament with regard to legislation and seeks to besmirch the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Dr Flegg:** And the mover isn't even here! He's not even interested in his own debate! He can't even be bothered to be in the chamber!

**Miss SIMPSON:** That is right; the Premier has gone. Most government ministers have gone, because they know that ultimately they have 59 seats in this House. They will take their vote. They will besmirch the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition, but they will do it by the fact of the arrogance of their numbers. This is a government that said that it was going to rule as if it had a majority of one. We have not seen any evidence that this government has the humility and respect for this parliament.

**Mr Copeland:** We saw what they did in question time.

**Miss SIMPSON:** We saw what happened at question time; I take that interjection. We have a situation where the government, by weight of its numbers, is able to give whatever time it likes for what are essentially ministerial statements during question time.

The state opposition—the formal opposition in this place—may only get seven or eight questions in question time, but the government by weight of its numbers is always able to put through what it wants to do. In this case, it did not want to have a question time. But, if we truly respect the rights and privileges and the role of this parliament, the need for question time to be available to the official opposition is one that we must see as being sacrosanct. When we have a government that wants to abuse its rights in this place, it becomes even more important that the role of the opposition is not overridden by the fact that the government has these numbers.

Time expired.