



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 10 October 2006

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I have moved that Michael Francis Reynolds do take the chair of the House as Speaker. I welcome all members to the 52nd Parliament, especially the 19 new members who have been sworn in this morning. It is an honour for all members to represent their constituents and I wish them well in those endeavours.

It is my privilege and honour to nominate Michael Francis Reynolds MP for the position of Speaker. Mike Reynolds has been the member for Townsville since 1998. He has the experience, determination and ability to fulfil the demanding duties of Speaker in the 52nd Parliament. The member for Townsville served Queenslanders from 2004 until 2006 as the Minister for Child Safety and from 2001 to 2004 as the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland. He served as my parliamentary secretary in north Queensland from 1998 to 2001.

Born in Manly, New South Wales, on 16 September 1946—and we have forgiven him for that, of course—Mike Reynolds obtained a Bachelor of Social Work degree from James Cook University in 1978. He is a father of two. Prior to becoming a parliamentarian he had a distinguished academic career, including as professor of local government studies at the University of Canberra from 1992 to 1995 and visiting professor from 1995 to 1998.

From 1995 to 1998 he held the position of Director of the Northern Australia Social Research Institute and Director of the Centre for Social and Welfare Research. He was the President of the National Tertiary Education Union at James Cook University from 1996 to 1998. From 1973 to 1989 Mike Reynolds served as a member of the Townsville City Council. He was deputy mayor of Townsville from 1976 to 1980—he was a member of the reform group at that time—and then mayor of Townsville from 1980 to 1989.

Mike Reynolds was a member of the state executive of the Local Government Association of Queensland from 1983 to 1989. He has a very strong commitment to local community. This was recognised in 1985 when he was awarded membership of the Order of Australia for service to local government and the community. Mike Reynolds was the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority from 1990 to 1996 and Chairman of the ACT Vocational Training Authority from 1992 to 1995.

Mr Presiding Member, the role of the Speaker, as you know having been Speaker, is to maintain order and to act with authority and impartiality. I believe the member for Townsville will be able to perform this role admirably. He knows the rules and regulations of the House and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. In my view, and I hope the view of the majority of this chamber, Mike Reynolds is ideally suited to be the Speaker of the 52nd Parliament and I nominate him accordingly.

Mr Presiding Member, I know that from time to time there is debate about the performance of Speakers in this House. There is no more difficult position than trying to keep order here and doing it in an impartial way. There are robust contributions made by both sides of the parliament. From time to time, sitting in the Speaker's chair is about as hot as it gets in this chamber or in politics. For the Speaker to be successful, regardless of who is elected, they need the goodwill of both sides of the parliament and also the objective support of the leadership of the various political parties.

I believe that Mike can achieve what I have said about keeping order impartially. Of course we want a parliament that is robust. The last thing we want is to go to a wake. But we must also appreciate the standing orders or we will end up with a rabble. That means, appropriately, that tough questions should be asked and ministers should appropriately give answers. The person who has to mediate in all of that is the Speaker. As I said before, the Speaker cannot do that without the goodwill of both sides. I urge all members that, once the Speaker is elected today, we give the Speaker our full support to make sure that this parliament is run in an orderly way. The community is sick of the argy-bargy that takes place in politics. It wants a parliament that performs with some degree of decorum. I believe that Mike Reynolds would offer that as Speaker.