



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 29 November 2006

CENSURE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.02 pm): This debate is about protecting the standards and privileges of the House. This is about ensuring that the community has some respect for parliament. The community expects parliament to behave in an appropriate way. That means that the privileges of the House should not be abused. We should not have information put to this House that is scurrilous, without any foundation or without any fact.

We had 10 minutes from the Leader of the Opposition and not one fact did he put on the table. My challenge to the Leader of the Opposition is this: if he has any information about any minister or former minister or member or former member who has not put appropriate material in their return that he table that information in this House in the next 12 hours. If he cannot do that then what he has demonstrated is that he is nothing more than a mud-slinger.

My challenge to the Leader of the Opposition is very simple. My challenge is this. In my view he has the next 12 hours to put the material on the table of the House. Tomorrow is our last sitting day this year. If he has any material he should put it on the table of this House.

What did he do? He tried to get out of what he said. If we go back to the *Hansard*, what did he say? He said, 'Fudge the entries in the pecuniary interests register.'

Mr SEENEY: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. You would not allow me to discuss what I said yesterday. You sat me down.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the Premier.

Mr BEATTIE: My concern about what has happened here is that the Leader of the Opposition has deliberately maligned people, without any foundation or any facts, on the basis of their longevity. Let us look at the reality here. If we look at the return for the member for Nicklin—and I am sorry to raise this—we find that he is in the same position as those referred to by the Leader of the Opposition before. What has he done? If ever there was an honest man in this place it is the member for Nicklin. He should be treated in the same way as Terry Mackenroth or anyone else.

The only issue is longevity. What about the former member for Robina. The former member for Robina was here for almost 17 years and yet he lists only a—

Mr SEENEY: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Once again, you would not allow me to engage in that sort of debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Before you got to your feet, I was just going to also remind the Premier that there is a procedure in schedule 2 of the standing orders for making complaints concerning the alleged failure of members to comply with the requirement relating to the registration of interests. I expect that honourable members will abide by the procedures laid down in the standing orders and will refrain from abusing the privileges of the House.

Mr BEATTIE: That is exactly right. I am not making any allegation against anyone. That is the difference between the Leader of the Opposition and me. What I am saying is very simply this. The fact that the former Leader of the Liberal Party was here for 17 years and he had only a joint interest in a

property means nothing. It does not mean that he acted improperly. I would use those complaint procedures if they were necessary, but none of them are because no-one has behaved inappropriately. The only person who has alleged inappropriate behaviour is the Leader of the Opposition, and what a disgrace it is. He has named people in this House. He has abused privilege. He has brought the House into disrepute. He is not fit to be the Leader of the Opposition.

I make the point again. The Leader of the Opposition was making allegations on the basis of ownership of property and longevity. I am saying in terms of the former member for Robina that there is nothing wrong with having served here for almost 17 years and listing only a joint interest in one property. There is nothing wrong with it. Nor is there anything wrong in relation to the return of the member for Nicklin. This is a disgrace.

I make this point and make it clearly. If the Leader of the Opposition has any evidence of any improper behaviour then he should put up or shut up. He has an opportunity to go to the CMC in the next 12 hours or table any information on the floor of this parliament. He could not even tell the truth about his own speech that he made to the Press Club. He misrepresented it in the House yesterday. He could not lie straight in bed. The reality is that—

Mr SEENEY: On a point of order. That is offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr BEATTIE: I withdraw. I make this point. If the Leader of the Opposition continues down this road he will simply bring the National Party into more disrepute, if that is possible, which electorally is beneficial to us. My concern—and this is why this has been done today—is to protect the privileges of the House, to make sure that this House is regarded appropriately in the community and to protect the innocent reputations of decent people. If we follow the logic of the Leader of the Opposition then something was wrong with the returns of a string of people including Independents, members of the Liberal Party, members of the National Party and members of the Labor Party, which is absolute nonsense.