



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 19 August 2009

MOTION: NUTTALL, MR G

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.06 pm): Tonight Labor members of parliament have a chance to start to redress a terrible blight on this Queensland parliament when in 2005 it was recalled under extraordinary circumstances to absolve Gordon Nuttall of the potential of facing a criminal charge under the Criminal Code. Clearly these Labor members have learned nothing. Tonight members of the Labor government have continually denied that they did anything wrong in 2005 when senior members of this government, including Premier Bligh and her Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, defended and in fact gave glowing character references for Gordon Nuttall and then proceeded with the extraordinary action of using their numbers to pervert the processes of this parliament.

I have listened to the Attorney-General, who clearly has no understanding of the role of this parliament in determining issues that are not within the criminal domain, such as contempt. We say that it must be possible for such matters to come before a parliamentary ethics and privileges committee. There are a range of issues that are within the parliamentary domain that must come back before an ethics and privileges committee if evidence shows that they are to be proceeded upon further. Certainly pecuniary interest registers are in the domain of the parliamentary process. This Labor government has learned nothing. It is still protecting its mate, Gordon Nuttall. It is still protecting the culture of cronyism, the stench of which is so appalling that the people of Queensland do not trust this government.

This is a Labor government for its Labor mates, of its Labor mates and by its Labor mates. This is a Labor government that has been in power now for nearly 20 years. It has no idea about the separation of powers and it clearly has no idea about the respect for and the role of parliamentary processes.

What we are calling for tonight is to start to redress the blight on this parliament from 2005. What we are calling on this parliament to do is to recognise that there have to be issues that are handled within the parliamentary domain. There is still a need outside of the parliamentary domain for a royal commission. There is still a need to address other issues which go right to the heart of corruption of this government—issues which we will not let up on and which we will continue to pursue.

I have heard Labor members say that because the Premier has released a green paper that somehow this is addressing these issues of accountability. Yet here tonight we hear once again Labor defending its actions of 2005 which cannot be defended by any reasonable person. It fails the test of ethics, it fails the test of morality and it fails this parliament and the standards that the people of Queensland expect of their parliamentarians. The green paper does not restore the Criminal Code and it certainly does not restore what occurred in 2005.

Let us look at the character references that were given by the Deputy Premier and the Premier that day. They are still defending their actions. They have not yet apologised to this parliament for their actions. The Deputy Premier and the Premier defended Gordon Nuttall and said that he was a man of integrity and a man of honesty. If they truly believed they got it wrong, then they would support our motion tonight to ensure that those other issues potentially of great dishonesty that go to matters that are within the parliamentary domain and that should be examined by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee rightfully come back into this domain so that they can be addressed.

Tonight this motion is about restoring respect to the Queensland parliament. It is about restoring respect to the role that this House has. I call on Labor members to not make the mistake of their predecessors, to not follow the Premier and the previous mistakes that she made in defending Gordon Nuttall. Tonight there is a chance to say no to cronyism and corruption in the Labor Party and to take a stand and restore some respect to the Queensland parliament by supporting this motion that the opposition has moved here tonight.