




Speech by

Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.19 pm): What an act to follow, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham! It is always good to rebut the points of the member for Mulgrave and the member for Bundamba. If I can impart any advice to the new members for South Brisbane and Rockhampton, it would be this: one ought not follow the lead that one has just seen and the drivel that came out of the mouth of the member for Bundamba for the last 20 minutes. If there was hypocrisy in this place at all, we have just had 20 minutes of it thrown at us. Let us deal with a couple of issues. Member for Bundamba, do not leave yet; I have not finished! Tonight the member for Bundamba used this place to attack the member for Mansfield—a new member in this place who has not yet made his maiden speech. It is disgraceful enough that she would not allow at least a couple of days before attacking the member for Mansfield, but let him make his maiden speech first. That is the first point.

The second point I want to make on the member for Bundamba's enlightening contribution is this: she said that she supports the bill in terms of the Speaker's role on the CLA and passionately said, 'Tonight we are righting a wrong. We did the wrong thing and tonight we're righting it.' However, she did not take my interjection when I said, 'But did you vote for it?' Did she vote for it last year when they took the powers off the Speaker? We know that the member for Bundamba did vote for it. When the Liberal National Party opposition came into this place in that debate and moved those very important amendments to restore some of the power to the Speaker, did the member for Bundamba vote with the opposition at the time? No! She did not vote for our amendments but then comes in here tonight in a storm and says, 'Tonight we're righting a wrong!' She had the opportunity to right that wrong last year and she chose not to, because that is in the DNA of the Labor Party. Its members are hypocrites in that its members had an opportunity in this place to stand up for those particular rights as we do, because the Liberal-Nationals believe in the freedom of the individual.

Whilst talking about the individual—and forgive me for at least 60 seconds to go off track, Madam Deputy Speaker Cunningham—the Labor Party attended the national conference of unions in the last 48 hours. I saw a comment—

Mr Newman: Wasn't that an orgy of self-congratulations!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is unparliamentary.

Mr Seeney: Especially in the same sentence as union credit cards!

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of *Hansard* and for the benefit of the Premier and Deputy Premier, I will not take those interjections. The chairman of the Council of Unions said a few days ago that the problem with unions—and I suspect the Labor Party because of the affiliation with the union movement—is that they have a crisis of individualism. A crisis of individualism! That is the problem with the Labor Party, and on 24 March it did not get the message.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: There are seven sitting opposite, and the one attacking me now still does not get the message. In fact, the one attacking me, the member for South Brisbane, was deputy secretary of the Labor Party in that last state election campaign—and still she does not get it, will not accept the outcome of the election and what the people of Queensland have chosen. But I digress.

I made the point that the member for Bundamba had every opportunity to right that wrong. She cannot now stand in this place in good faith and say that tonight we are doing the right thing because we know we are, but we are doing nothing more than what we tried to do a year ago and move the amendments. We had that commitment and we are fulfilling that commitment tonight.

The member for Bundamba also said that she would be happy to be here on Sundays, Saturdays and weeknights. How times have changed, because only at the beginning of the year how many pieces of legislation were guillotined by the former government? How many pieces of legislation were put into a cognate debate? The member for Mulgrave comes in here tonight whingeing and whining that he did not get a briefing in time. For goodness sake! As they say, everyone rises to their level of incompetence, and the member for Mulgrave certainly did that tonight. This is a 19-page bill. If we take out the explanatory notes and the index, it is about 15 pages. My year 4 daughter would have seen this bill tabled this morning, read it and understood it. Yet the member opposite talks about briefings.

The Treasurer reminds me of a time, member for Mulgrave, not that long ago when the opposition continually asked for briefings on legislation that were never given. We all recall coming in here when a bill was introduced and then later that day or the next day being given a briefing. The member opposite should not come in here and say that he has not had the opportunity to read a 14-page bill and he has not had the opportunity to digest the clauses in the bill, because the hypocrite over there was in the government. He was a minister in the former government.

A government member: Not a good one.

Mr BLEIJIE: Not a good minister; I take that interjection. He was a minister in the former government. The briefings that the opposition requested at the time were either never forthcoming or came at a vitally late stage in the process.

The legislation before the House tonight looks at a few things. It looks to determine the size of committees, and we supported the committee structure. I enjoyed being on the committee that had responsibility for the alcohol related violence inquiry with the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, the honourable member for Mermaid Beach and the former member for Beaudesert for a time until he was taken off that committee and replaced by the member for Surfers Paradise. The committee process does work. The reason we have to adjust and modernise the committee structure is that there is not enough of those in the corner over there to fulfil all of these committees. We cannot have a process where seven people serve on however many committees as possible. In fact, we are actually doing this for the opposition because we cannot expect it to fulfil all of those responsibilities in the committee process. That is the reason. The committee process will continue, and do members know why? It will continue because bills have to pass. This bill has to pass—it is just a mechanical change—to ensure that the bills that we have introduced today and the bills that will be forthcoming can be debated and properly scrutinised in the committee process. This bill has to have urgency attached to it because the government has introduced bills today that need to go through to the committee system.

This bill also deals with the CLA, and I note the contribution of the Premier in his opening remarks and the comments of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I am glad that the Speaker's powers are being restored, and I note that Madam Speaker made mention of that in the opening of parliament over the last two days. That is a good thing—that is, that the powers will be extended to the chair of the CLA, Madam Speaker. That is a good outcome that I would hope everyone in the House would support. The legislation deals with the title of assistant ministers being changed from parliamentary secretaries. The reason the Premier and the government went down this line of assistant ministers is that for too long in the Labor Party parliamentary secretaries were invisible. In fact, I bet your bottom dollar that at election time if you asked who the parliamentary secretaries were in the Labor Party no-one would be able to tell you. In fact, in the three years that I have served in here from 2009 until the March election I could not name anyone on the list of Labor Party parliamentary secretaries. Do you know why, member for South Brisbane? Because they were incompetent, they were complacent and they did nothing. That is the simple reality. They were invisible sitting in whatever seats they did up the back there.

But we have changed that. We have assistant ministers now with specific responsibilities. For instance, the member for Mansfield—and, obviously, I will not talk about how the member for Bundamba talked about the member for Mansfield—has specific responsibility for infrastructure and planning for the grunt department in the Deputy Premier's office to get Queensland moving again. We have changed the name from parliamentary secretary to assistant minister. These assistant ministers are charged with specific responsibilities. As the Premier has indicated time and time again, the ministers and the assistant

ministers will be responsible and accountable. If we are not, we will be gone. That is the warning that the leadership team and the Premier and the Deputy Premier have given. That is the first time we have had a Premier say that in many, many years in Queensland.

Mr Rickuss: 'What faction is he in?' is all the other Premier said.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer and refer to the comments I made before. The union president said that the crisis in the union is the individual. We do not think that is a problem. We embrace the individual. We want the individual to be successful, because we know that if the individual is successful then their families are successful and the Queensland economy is successful. So we can understand why the Labor Party in Queensland is in the position it is in by having that mentality—that it does not believe in the individual.

I commiserate with my good friend the member for Mermaid Beach, who I think has served for the shortest time in history as the Leader of the House, because we note that on the passing and the assent of this bill the Leader of the House will be known as the Manager of Government Business in the House. I hope he has enjoyed the responsibility that he has fulfilled today with great gusto. It has been fantastic to have him in that role. I look forward to him continuing in his new role.

We have talked about the pay levels and the Premier mentioned it in his speech. I am not going to comment on that. I will let the *Courier-Mail* and the other media commentators comment on the specifics of that matter. Tonight, we are getting done what needs to be done. We have heard lots from those opposite. The only one thing that I regret tonight is speaking a little too early. I am looking forward to the contribution of the member for South Brisbane in this debate tonight. I will try to remain in the House to listen with much interest.

I thank the Premier and I thank the Deputy Premier for getting on with the job. I thoroughly enjoyed the Labor Party members coming in tonight complaining that we were actually doing stuff, because they are just not used to it. I point out to all the new members that this is a big learning curve for them today—and for those new members opposite as well. It is quite odd that we would be in here at this time of night because, by this stage of night, the former Labor government would have guillotined debate on a bill. We will not. We will have this debate tonight.

I will conclude with these remarks. This is an important mechanism change that needs to happen. The Liberal National Party government, under the stewardship of Premier Newman, has lots of work to do to get Queensland back on track, and this is the start. I would anticipate that these committees that were established under the former government, and which will continue under this government with a little restructure, modernised to suit the times, as the Labor Party modernised the committee structure under the old system, will continue to scrutinise legislation and that the members of the public will have just as much say as they have previously in an open, new and transparent world in Queensland politics.