



Speech by
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard Thursday, 29 November 2012

VALEDICTORY

 Hon. JW SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (7.35 pm): I am pleased to make a contribution to the traditional valedictory debate at the end of the parliamentary year. As members in the House are well aware, the Premier is on his way to India as part of an important trade mission and because of that the traditional valedictory address that is normally delivered by the Premier as the House rises at the end of the parliamentary year was in fact delivered by the Premier immediately after question time this morning. The address that I will make will be a much foreshortened one, taking into account that the normal observations have been made in the address given by the Premier this morning.

It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity in this valedictory to first of all acknowledge the input and the efforts of everybody in the parliamentary precinct, everybody who has played a role in this parliament over the last 12 months. It was a year that will be long remembered in the life of the Queensland parliament. Governments do not change often in Queensland political history. If you look back across the records, governments do not change often. In 2012 the government in Queensland changed, and it did not just change in a normal way, for the sake of a better description; it changed massively, and this parliament for the remainder of the year—for the last two-thirds of the year—has become a parliament unlike any other in Queensland's history simply because of the numbers and the way the numbers are accommodated in this parliament. That has brought challenges for all of us. It has brought challenges for us in government, it has brought challenges for our colleagues in opposition, it has brought challenges for the parliamentary staff and it has brought challenges, Madam Speaker, I suspect for you and your deputies and your staff, because it is a rather unique situation but it is a situation that all of us have been honoured to be part of.

So tonight as we conclude the parliamentary sittings and we return to our electorates right across Queensland—we return each of us to our family homes to celebrate the Christmas season—can we all acknowledge within ourselves that we have all been part of something special this year. We have all been part of something rather unique. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate everybody who has played a role in that rather special and unique occurrence here in the Queensland parliament in 2012. To all of the new members who have given such delight to those of us who worked so hard in here in opposition to see so many people come in here—so many wonderfully qualified people—a whole new generation of Queensland MPs came into this parliament in March this year—a whole new generation—and it has been an enormous personal delight for us in the leadership team and the Premier to watch each of you come to terms with the fact that you are part of the most exclusive club in Queensland. Eighty-nine people sit in this parliament. Eighty-nine people sit here as of right once they have won that right at the behest of the constituents that they represent. Each of you have come in here and acquitted yourselves remarkably well given the challenge of making that transition. I extend those comments as well to the new members of the opposition, because despite our political differences, despite the huge gulf in our political philosophies at times, at the basis of our role we all perform the same task: we are all members of the Queensland parliament and we all represent our constituencies.

Madam Speaker, I extend to you and your staff congratulations on the roles that you and they have played in the parliament in the past year. I extend to the Clerk especially and his staff congratulations and thanks on behalf of all members of the parliament for the great roles that they played. To all of the parliamentary staff, for whom you and the Clerk are responsible and for whom you represent in this parliament, could you express to them the gratitude and the recognition of all the members of the parliament for the roles that they play.

Members, at this juncture we also need to reflect on the roles that our electorate office staff play. Each of us spend an enormous amount of time in this chamber, but the real work of representing our constituents goes on. Whether it is in Logan, whether it is in Biloela, whether it is in Cairns, whether it is in Mulgrave or down on the Gold Coast, the real work of representing our constituency goes on and that real work is done by the staff who work in our electorate offices. As we come to the end of the parliamentary year I think we should acknowledge their efforts. I know in most cases they take the opportunity to have holidays over the Christmas period as well. One thing that I have always said to my staff is that the Christmas period is a time when our electorate office closes for a couple of weeks so that everybody can have that well deserved holiday.

But most importantly, members, I think at the end of each parliamentary year we should recognise the contribution that is made by each and every one of our family members. As we leave this place and go back to our respective homes to spend that festive season with our family members, we should recognise the enormous contribution they make to ensure that we are able to sit in this chamber and fulfil the roles that we play on behalf of the people we represent. That is the same for me as it is for the opposition members. Each electorate and each particular circumstance brings with it its own particular challenges, but for those of us who represent electorates in regional Queensland that challenge can sometimes be particularly acute. Tonight, I want to recognise in the gallery a person who knows well those challenges. She is not here very often, so I am not going to miss the opportunity. I recognise my wife, Therese, who has put up with me fulfilling this role for 14 years and who I think knows better than most the challenges or the burdens that family members carry. That is not for one second to suggest that the role that Therese plays is not replicated over and over again in different circumstances in this chamber.

I conclude by wishing each and every member of this parliament a very merry Christmas and a very relaxing festive season. I look forward to seeing you return to this parliament in the new year to continue to participate in the great democratic institution that is the Queensland parliament.