



Speech by

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CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (12.01 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. The reason we are here today is a fellow by the name of Gordon Nuttall, who wandered these halls for some years, a fellow by the name of Peter Beattie, who wandered these halls for some years, a lady by the name of Anna Bligh, who also walked these halls for some years and all of the Labor members of parliament who on a day in 2005 decided that it was going to be okay to tell lies to parliament and voted to protect a man who was later found to be full of graft and corruption. At that point there was no knowledge whatsoever that this man was indeed a corrupt individual. They protected him for one reason. They wanted to get him out of jail on something for which he could easily have received a fairly serious slap on the wrist, I am sure, but it would have been no more than a slap on the wrist.

Since 9 December 2005 this place has devoted so much attention to Gordon Nuttall and the amendment that is in this bill today. That in itself was a theft on the people of Queensland. All of the talk, all of the effort, all of the proof that has been dug up and has taken away from the people of Queensland the time that could have been better spent developing good-quality legislation to assist the people of Queensland during a time in 2008 when we saw the marketplace turn down, people doing it tough, people losing their jobs in the building industry and what have you. During that time—I did not come into this place until 2009—this place was spending time and effort on this despicable act.

As I mentioned, there was unknown graft and corruption way back then. It had been going on for quite some time. I have taken the time to download a speech that Gordon Nuttall made at the bar in quite dramatic circumstances. He attended the bar with police and Corrective Services people behind him. I will read from the first couple of pages of the proceedings. Mr Speaker said—

Honourable members, in accordance with the resolution agreed to by the parliament on 7 April 2011, I will shortly call Mr Gordon Nuttall to appear in person at the bar of the House to address the House in relation to the specific charges of contempt set out in the order dated 7 April 2011. The Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the mace, will escort Mr Nuttall to the bar of the House.

As I said, in very dramatic circumstances Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall was announced at the bar of the House by the Sergeant-at-Arms bearing the mace. So there we had him standing, and I have to say that he was still in denial. He started his speech with this—

Mr Speaker, honourable members and the people of Queensland: I have considered long and hard how today's events may unfold. And, as a former student of ancient history, I am reminded that back in about 500 BC in the Babylonian Empire there was a king by the name of Darius and Darius had a governor by the name of Daniel, and for a range of reasons Daniel was thrown into a den full of lions.

How dramatic! He stated further—

As most of you would know, the following day the king went down and there was Daniel unharmed and untouched.

Did this man seriously see himself as a Daniel on that day in this place? He stated further—

While I hope that that may be my outcome today, I am a little bit more fearful. I feel as though perhaps I may have the same result as the Christians in the days of the Roman Empire when they were fed to the lions in the Colosseum. I hope that is not the case today.

How dramatic a man do we have here? This fellow told lies to this place, told lies to an estimates committee and continued to tell lies to an estimates committee to the extent that ultimately the then Premier of this state recalled parliament. At what cost? It was another theft on Queenslanders. At what cost to Queenslanders was it to call back all members of parliament from right around the state, or wherever they may have been at that time of year, on 9 December 2005? The then government recalled the parliament at significant cost to protect its mate. There are people in the Labor Party who today still hold their heads up high and say, 'We did the right thing.'

For as long as I have been in the House—since 2009—this side of the House has been very clear on its intent once it gained government. There were no ifs, buts or maybes. There was no worrying about, 'Hang on a second, what if we get in and maybe'—none of that. We said, 'This is going to be a priority. We are going to get this settled once and for all if you blatantly tell lies to parliament, if you blatantly tell lies to estimates committees.' I am not talking about accidental oversights. If a member accidentally says something that they later find to be incorrect then they can come back to the parliament and say, 'I was in error.' But to tell lies on purpose in this place and to cover up those lies is abhorrent. We are going to correct that situation here today.

Nuttall was here for 45 minutes that day telling us his story. He called on our Christian ethics, he called on our feelings of fatherhood and motherhood. He called on all sorts of things to protect himself. The reality is this: at the time that he came to this place and lied to the estimates committee he did so knowingly. Unknown to the parliament at the time though, he was lying in another way. He had been receiving graft and corruption from a number of individuals—two that were proven. I have been reading with interest how Mr Nuttall says it came about. He and Mr Talbot were sitting around as friends having a beer. They had a bit of a chat about a few things and it got around to family and so forth. It was decided that Mr Nuttall's solicitor was going to ring Mr Talbot's office. There was an exchange of letters for a loan. The man is in denial. He was a blatant liar back then. Members opposite got up and said how honourable he was, how much they appreciated him as a colleague, the quality of the man and so forth and so on. It was a different story in the three years that I was in this parliament when he was found guilty of this graft and corruption. They changed their tune then. They made it very clear that they were very unhappy about Mr Gordon Nuttall and what he had done to this place.

But did they bother to correct the record and change the laws back to where they should have been? No, they completely ignored it, turned a blind eye to it and simply went on and on. I commend the Attorney-General for bringing this bill to the House as quickly as he has. I commend the bill to the House.