



Speech by
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND HOLDING BILL:
MOTION**

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.11 pm): At the outset I must say that I am absolutely appalled by the ridiculous tactic of the member for Bundamba. I am certain that the people of Bundamba are absolutely disappointed by the representation that has again been foisted on them. I am sure they are wishing there were only six members of the Labor Party in the House instead of the current 'magnificent seven', if you would like to call them that.

Somewhere along the line the Labor Party has the idea that if you mention the word 'Aboriginal' it is their people who you are talking about. Quite clearly, the good folk in the electorates of Cook, Mount Isa, Dalrymple, Cairns and Townsville do not believe that for one second. They could not wait to throw them out of those areas which have major populations of Indigenous people.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr STEVENS: The members of the Labor Party should not think that they have this God-given right to talk on behalf—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Bundamba, the member is not taking your interjections. I have asked you numerous times to stop. I now warn you under standing order 253A.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for your protection on this matter, because it is a very serious matter that we are discussing in this motion. Quite clearly, the member for Bundamba, who has moved this motion as a deliberate ploy, has become all of a sudden in this House the Queen of stunts for the Labor Party. She really has no recognition of the importance of this bill to be passed for the betterment of Indigenous people. I congratulate the minister, the Premier and the cabinet on putting forward these matters to make Queensland a better place for Indigenous people. I cannot believe that the Manager of Opposition Business, who represents Indigenous people—

Mrs Miller: Mulgrave.

Mr STEVENS: I thank the member very much. I remember his dad, but I forgot about him. I cannot believe that he does not understand what this bill before the House will do. Even the member for South Brisbane, the brand-new wise prophet of all things in Queensland—a Labor Party guru, a future leader of the Labor Party—believes that the minister on this occasion has worked very diligently and very hard to get a better outcome. So what are we doing here with this motion to delay this bill from going through the House? It is absolutely disgusting that these Labor members, particularly the member for Bundamba, have flown in the face of the system that was put in place by the Labor Party when it was in government. The CLA members, which include the opposition leader, the deputy opposition leader and the Manager of Government Business, put up their hands and agreed for the committee process to work in relation to this bill so that it can go forward and be dealt with in an expeditious, proper and appropriate manner.

So what happens now? The member for Bundamba—the queen of stunts—comes in and says, ‘Let’s delay this a little bit further. Let’s stop the LNP. Let’s stop the minister from doing a good thing for Indigenous people. We will throw it back to the committee and delay it’—and get nothing done, like the Labor Party did when it sat in this place for 14 years and prevaricated over getting nothing done in this state to help Indigenous people. They put up some rubbish schemes such as wild rivers to placate their Greens mates and prohibited Indigenous people from getting a better life through empowerment, which is clearly what they are calling for. A good fellow up there called Noel Pearson is working very hard for his community and he speaks the language of economic empowerment.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, the leader is not taking your interjections. I would ask you to please stop.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you. This motion is a deliberate stalling tactic by the members opposite. Quite clearly, it is designed to throw the legislation back for the political purpose of stirring up some members of the community. For just about every piece of legislation that comes to this House there will be somebody in the community who does not agree with it. I can assure members that when the body corporate bill comes to this House there will be a lot of people who will not agree with it. But in a true democratic society, the majority and the views of the government of the day will prevail in the best interests of Queenslanders. However, there will be people who will feel disenfranchised and unhappy with the legislation that was put before the House. There will be Indigenous people who will be unhappy about this legislation that is before the House. There will always be people who are unhappy with legislation before the House. There will not be unanimous agreement from Indigenous people about the legislation that the minister is trying to pass through this House for the overall betterment of Indigenous people.

So what do we have here? We have a deliberate attempt by the member for Bundamba, in her new grandstanding, queen of stunts role for the Labor Party—if you like, the attack dog in terms of the really scary, brand-new persona that she has developed in the 54th Parliament. In the 53rd Parliament she sat up the back of the House and basically did not say boo to any legislation. All of a sudden this member has come forward as the new guru of everything in Queensland. Now, we even have her as the guru of this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill. To me, it is a very sad day for the folk of the electorate of Bundamba to have their member wasting time, grandstanding, pulling silly stunts and disrespecting the chair on many occasions, which has been noticed because of the number of times she has been warned and I think she probably holds the record in this 54th Parliament for being thrown out for the most number of times.

Mrs Miller: No, I don’t.

Mr STEVENS: I cannot think of any member who has been thrown out more than this member. What I find very tragic about this whole motion before the House is that it is quite clearly a deliberate stalling tactic. It is a deliberate tactic to throw the legislation back to the committee. Will there be another result out of that committee? Is the committee make-up going to change? I do not think so. I am not aware of any change to the committee system. We will be going back to the same committee with the same people and they will do the same investigation.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Government Business is misleading the House. In fact, there will be a change to the committee. We agreed to the motion earlier today.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for South Brisbane, if you believe that the Manager of Government Business has misled the House, I would suggest that you write to the Speaker.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Given that you have been named earlier today, I would suggest that you cease with the frivolous points of order. The Manager of Government Business has the call.

Mr STEVENS: In relation to the matter that has just been raised by the member for South Brisbane in her uniquely clever style, the numbers on that committee will not change at all. The member for South Brisbane might not realise it, but the Manager of Government Business actually sets the membership on those committees. I am quite clearly not misleading the House at all. It will be going back to the same committee. It will be going back to a committee with the same government members as opposed to non-government members. I am not hearing from the member for South Brisbane that there was anything improper or wrong in terms of legal matters with the dealing by that committee of matters in relation to this bill. Being a betting man as I am, I will give you some pretty strong odds, like about 10 to 1 on, that we will get the same result from that committee, which the members on the other side well and truly know, and they can use it for a further political purpose to jump up and down and say, ‘Look at us. We are friends of the Indigenous community’, when, in fact, they are hindering the Indigenous community very much by holding up this bill which is trying to get a better outcome for Indigenous people in Queensland. We are trying to get legislation through that delivers a better outcome for Indigenous people.

I think it is an absolute blight on the Labor Party, particularly in relation to their supposed representation of Indigenous people. I think it is a very, very serious destabilising matter that they have come up with in this stunt atmosphere that the member for Bundamba keeps pursuing to try to deliberately stop betterment for our Indigenous people. It is a very, very sad day. I hope that the people of Bundamba remember the paucity of representation that they have received from their local member at the next election.