




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Wednesday, 1 August 2012

CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.15 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. In his introductory speech the minister stated—

The bill fulfils the Queensland government's pre-election pledge that within our first 100 days of forming government we would make it, once again, illegal to lie in parliament—that is, that we would re-enact repealed section 57 of the Criminal Code which contained the offence of false evidence before parliament.

...

This government has been clear in giving to the people of Queensland an undertaking to restore accountability in government. This is a central part of our action plan in government.

The minister also stated—

This bill reintroduces the criminal offence of giving false evidence to parliament or committees. Knowingly giving false evidence before the parliament or one of its committees is conduct cutting to the heart of parliamentary privilege and is conduct deserving of criminal sanction.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Byrne): Order! There is too much audible conversation. I ask honourable members to keep it down.

Mr KNUTH: The commitment made by the LNP is one that it has made for quite a number of years. I commend it for acting on this commitment. The LNP has made a number of commitments in relation to local health boards, stamp duty concessions and freezing electricity prices, even though it voted with the then government to pass on electricity price rises after the carbon tax came into effect.

The reason for this bill arises from a committee hearing in which a question was asked by Stuart Copeland and the then minister in his answer lied to the committee. As I recall, at that time it exposed the shocking state of the health system. Also, a bloke called Rob Messenger was able to expose 'Dr Death' and bring to light the tragedies involved with that.

I do believe that politicians should not lie. There are times when politicians have to come back into the House and correct themselves. I have seen that happen on many occasions. But I definitely do not support knowingly lying. In terms of politics in general, I feel that if people were to be charged for breaking election promises and commitments then probably half of the state and federal parliamentarians would be in jail.

We talk about truthfulness and honesty. Just before the state election, Charters Towers and the Dalrymple electorate were flooded with LNP members pounding the streets and promising the world: 'Stick with us and you'll never go hungry again.' People had never seen anything like it. Parliamentarians, presidents, senators—you name it—were there in force.

It was disappointing that before the election shadow ministers visited the neighbourhood centre and bragged about what a great service it was and how it had won service awards, and two of those services

have now been cut by the LNP. With regard to bats, the LNP promised to get rid of the bats. It did not promise to say that it would blame the council.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. I have been to many circuses in my life, but I fail to see any relevance between bats and section 57 of the Criminal Code. I ask for your guidance as to relevance for this member.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member to return to the bill.

Mr KNUTH: We might be able to call this place a circus, but it is about integrity. We hear about integrity in politicians and integrity in ministers. We hear how we have to change the parliament.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KNUTH: Those opposite say, 'We want honesty and integrity'—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KNUTH:—'and we'll bring about accountability. And we'll promise'—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will take—

Mr KNUTH:—'that we will be kind to public servants.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is to take his seat. The member is warned.

Mr Bleijie: We're talking about rats, not bats!

Mr KNUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been warned, so I support the government in its position with regard to lying to parliament.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will take his seat.

Mr KNUTH: I support the government, but I just hope—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will take his seat!

Mr KNUTH: I just hope that there is accountability in politics, in promises and in election promises.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is warned under standing order 253A. I call the member for Bulimba.

A government member: How do you follow that?