




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2014

MOTION: AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (11.45 am): I am extremely disappointed at the debate on this matter that was manifestly canvassed at the CLA—and all views were taken on board at the CLA. Even members who claim to represent the interests of minor parties and individuals were at the CLA; they were aware of all matters in relation to this issue. We have been evolving the voting system of this parliament for quite some time. It was of concern that we lost almost two days of parliament out of a 42-day sitting year on the divisions within this parliament. That is why we moved to a new system that is part of this government's resolve to provide a better treatment of legislation, in this case, a better outcome. It also provides more opportunities for members to speak in the parliament. We were even looking at matters in terms of electronic voting to get a better system of voting, and that may well be a case for further investigation—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order, members.

Mr STEVENS:—as we further evolve the process of 21st century voting in the parliament of Queensland. We are leading the way in this parliament. The CLA plays an important part and has an important role to play in that case and all avenues should be explored. As part of that system, quite a deal of time and exercise was taken in relation to the process that we first came up with, which was on a trial basis to see how it would affect things. I think most members would agree that the new voting system in this parliament has been very effective. I think it has been a great step forward. However, that is not to say that that system was—

Mr Johnson: It saved about two days of the year.

Mr STEVENS: Yes, two days of the year. However, it was not 100 per cent perfect from the day we introduced it into the House. As a responsible CLA would do, we considered matters to improve the effectiveness and the delivery of the voting system in this parliament. It has always been that the Government Whip delivers the notice of the voting intentions of the government and the Opposition Whip delivers the intentions of all those who are opposed to the government's position, and that has been the case for 150 years. Nothing we have done there would at all disadvantage Independents or minor parties. What we have done is look at those matters and provide a more effective and efficient way to have the minor parties, the Independents and the other—I will not say rats and mice down the back—people down the back involved in the official record regarding how their vote is counted in this parliament. So the recommendation agreed to unanimously in the CLA was to have an official record signed off by the Independents and the members of minor parties to make sure they do not flip-flop on some of their decisions to embarrass the Clerk and his office at a later date.

In other words, you will sign off on the way you have voted to make sure that there is no change—which we have seen in this parliament on occasions late at night, but I am not mentioning names. I will not go there. The fact of the matter is that you will have your vote officially recorded.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I hear some clamouring down the back in relation to, 'I want to stand up and be famous!' 'I want to be counted!' 'I want to be seen!' 'I want to be relevant!' That is all about self-indulgence and self-importance—

Mr JUDGE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! What is your point of order?

Mr JUDGE: That is an offensive remark. This is about disproportionate representation—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Yeerongpilly, I did not hear that as being applied to you personally, but as a broader general statement. I do not believe that there was personal innuendo and offence directly made. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: When comments are made across a broad spectrum of people and some people take exception on a personal basis, it obviously indicates their own personal guilt in the circumstances—

Mr JUDGE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr JUDGE: That is offensive. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Again I did not interpret that as personally being offensive to any one individual, but another general statement. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will continue with my general statements, which obviously involve certain members in the crossbenches, the minor parties and the individual members in this House. The fact of the matter is that their votes will be signed off on and they will be recorded. It is in no way to their detriment. Quite clearly it will protect the Clerk's position in the recording of the votes, and it will make sure that this evolving system of voting in the Queensland parliament is set not only for today, but for many, many years to come.