




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2015

MOTION: SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise on this very unusual occasion to speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition to suspend the standing rules and orders of this Legislative Assembly for tonight's debate. It is necessary to take this very unusual step owing to the unforeseen difficulties of this parliament presented by the current voting procedures in the House that, without doubt, have been tainted by the actions of the member for Cook. That is why we need this opportunity to bring forward this motion on changing the voting system. As we know, the previous parliament voted to change that parliamentary voting system through changes to the standing orders. That occurred at a point in time when no-one could have envisaged that there would be difficulties in taking a tainted vote in parliament. We need to re prosecute this matter, because it was not on the agenda when that voting system, which the Labor Party agreed to—it went through the CLA and the Labor Party agreed to it—was voted for in this House.

But matters have changed. Even the Clerk and all of his officers never envisaged the problem that we have with a tainted vote in the parliament. Mr Speaker, everyone from your good self right across to the Premier and to the opposition have said that there are difficulties. On the LNP's side in opposition, we have great difficulty with the possibility—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I have been quite patient with some of the other speakers who have been at pains to be clear in responding to your directions earlier today in relation to the ruling on this debate. You gave an instruction about making sure that the nature of this debate was very narrow and related to the suspension of standing orders. The Leader of Opposition Business has not made an attempt to make the distinction about how there are different matters. He is effectively making the speech that he made earlier this year.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The reason for this very unusual motion is quite clear. Quite clearly, the dynamics in the House have changed and have even changed since May, when the matter was brought forward in debate in this House. There have been, I think, three or four further allegations stemming from the original allegations. This matter needs to be re prosecuted. The only way that we can re prosecute the matter is through the parliamentary system by seeking leave in this House—which, contrary to the assertion made by the member for Springwood, is totally within parliamentary processes and procedures.

Members are well aware of the changes that have occurred. The media has brandished them right across Queensland. The people in the member's own electorate and the Premier herself have been made aware of these matters. That situation has changed considerably the dynamics of the situation since we dealt with the matter in May. The proposed changes would give us the opportunity, in the voting regime of this House under the standing orders, to restore confidence in the honesty and

integrity of this delicately balanced House. We on this side of the parliament are loath to take a tainted vote. That is what we would repropose should we have the opportunity to debate this matter again. We are clear in the fact that, on the important legislation that comes into this House on matters that affect Queenslanders—from domestic violence right through to all the other issues about which legislation is brought into this House—under the current circumstances of the member's place in this parliament we would not be taking a vote from the member. For us to commit to have that voting system introduced, we need the opportunity to debate this matter again.

If the Premier is fair dinkum in her calls for honesty and integrity—as, no doubt, Mr Speaker, you are very keen to see the honesty and integrity of this House upheld in every way—then the Premier should support the opportunity for us to debate this matter again, given the change in circumstances that we have had since we debated the matter in May, so that we can put in place a system that reflects and upholds the high levels and high ideals of integrity of the members of this House. Under the current system, this government is denying the opportunity to put in place a fair and equitable system of knowing which way the minor parties are going to vote before the government votes on matters, before the opposition votes on matters. It is only fair, just and reasonable. Any attempt to hide from the debate on this matter is purely a deliberate act of defending the indefensible in terms of hiding the ability to use the member for Cook as a support for the government for each and every issue that it needs to get through this House.