




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.53 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. With regard to the provisions relating to the Speaker, the explanatory notes state that the policy objectives of the bill are that it—

restores autonomy to the position of Speaker by making the Speaker, rather than the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA), responsible for the management of the Parliamentary Service, including its budget;

provides the Speaker with a deliberative vote at CLA meetings on questions regarding all of the CLAs remaining responsibilities and a casting vote in the case of a tied vote;

provides that the Speaker, rather than the Leader of the House, is responsible for calling CLA meetings and setting the agenda;

allows a crossbench member to be included on the membership of the CLA;

increases the quorum at a CLA meeting from four to five members (MPs);

gives the CLA responsibility for any matter referred to it by the Speaker;

I think these provisions are good. It returns power to the Speaker. It was a failed experiment from the beginning that was supported by the two major parties.

The previous bill gave power to the CLA. I believe that that power was abused. I recall that one member of parliament got offside with the CLA and they put that member into what is called the dungeon on level 7. Another two MPs got offside with the CLA and they put them in one of the worst rooms in the Parliamentary Annexe. That was an abuse of power. It is good to see that the Speaker will perform an administrative role when it comes to the Parliamentary Service. I believe this is good for democracy in Queensland.

I give credit where credit is due to the Leader of the Opposition. He indicated that the Newman government did not handle the issue of the pay rise for politicians very well. It was atrocious. It was bad medicine. It sickened me, but it also sickened Queenslanders to see mass sackings. We saw mass cuts to programs. We saw cuts when it comes to lawnmowing vouchers for pensioners. We were told that we had to tighten our belts and then we had a government that pushed to give themselves a massive pay rise. It was not a good thing to do. It was a bad moment for Queensland.

We have seen a massive turnover of members of parliament in the last four years. There have been around 70 of them; it could be more. I believe the pay rise was to be \$60,000 for ministers and \$70,000 for the Premier. That pay rise made the former premier a more highly paid politician than Obama.

KAP moved an amendment at that time to link pay rises of politicians to that of public servants. We could see that we have valuable public servants such as ambos, firies and nurses. They are No. 1 when it comes to the most valued and trusted professions. Politicians are rated 49th out of 50 most trusted professions. We are linking ourselves to those in the most trusted professions. I feel that that is a good move.

This legislation brings back fairness and balance. It helps remove the bad perception that we are out to smash the little players while politicians feather their own nests. I commend this bill to the House.