




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2020

MOTION

Sessional Orders

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.57 pm): It is with great sadness that on the first day of the 57th Parliament we see the hubris and arrogance of this re-elected Labor government evident in the House in terms of limiting the time that the opposition and the crossbenches have to debate matters that are important to the Queensland economy, electorates et cetera. I think Labor titans such as the Robbie Schwartens, Terry Mackenroths and John Mickels would be totally embarrassed about this Labor government hiding from debate under the Westminster system. They loved the debate. They said, 'Bring it on. We know our stuff. If you put up things, we will argue against them.' This particular Labor government likes to hide, with the minimum amount of sitting time possible and the minimum amount of scrutiny possible.

Everybody knows that under the Westminster system if the government does not sit then the opposition does not get the opportunity to hold it to account, and that is our job. That is what the electorate pays us to do—that is, hold this government to account. The opposition should be afforded every opportunity to have a full and frank debate on every issue within this House. Every member, including the crossbenchers, should have every opportunity to debate all matters within this House.

I go back to the 55th Parliament—and I know that the member for Logan would know that I am not telling the House any untruth on this matter—and the discussion about family-friendly hours. I thought it was a very good thing to happen for this parliament, but I thought the sitting day should have ended at 9.30 pm. Unfortunately, I ran second again and that moved on in my political career, and those friendly hours did not occur. We ended up with the 7.30 cut-off time and guess what? A 7.30 finish allows all the Labor members in Brisbane to be home in time for local affairs, local lobbying, local community groups—and that is not what this parliament is about.

This parliament sits for 42 or 43 days over 13 or 14 weeks most years except for unusual years. This is the opportunity for the opposition to hold the current government to account. That is not happening under this particular set of standing orders. Unless the parliament sits for the appropriate number of hours, our debate time is cut short. For the member for McConnell to rubbish on about how our members were complaining about speaking—one of the things we all—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr STEVENS: There were no names, no mentions, no pack drill. It was a fairytale put forward. We all love the opportunity to speak. Unfortunately, we are curtailed under these current standing orders and we are restrained to discuss matters that the government thinks are important. Yet we are limited in speaking to other issues that are important to the crossbench and our good selves by debate that is forced upon us by this arrogant, hubristic government that we have now in Queensland in the 57th Parliament.

The amendment moved by the Manager of Opposition Business is totally appropriate, totally reasonable and totally fair in terms of taking this parliament forward and giving everybody—the representatives of all electorates—including all the backbenchers over there and the crossbenchers behind me, the opportunity to speak. I think it is a reasonable amendment that the Manager of Opposition Business brings to this House and it should be supported. There is nothing to be frightened of. All the government members and ministers have to do is defend their territory and they should have enough experience to do that.

Ms Grace: Trust us. We're not frightened of you.

Mr STEVENS: I just received an interjection from the Labor union heavyweight opposite. She goes on with the fairytales—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Comments through the chair, please, member for Mermaid Beach.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask that the member refer to members by their correct title.

Mr STEVENS: The member for McConnel, the Labor union—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The point of order is fair. I would ask you to refer to members by their correct parliamentary—

Mr STEVENS: The member for McConnel, the Labor union heavyweight. The bottom line is she likes bossing people around.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. What is your point of order?

Mrs D'ATH: After you just gave a direction to the member for Mermaid Beach he deliberately then referred to the member by another title and not her correct title.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take some advice. Resume your seat please, member for Mermaid Beach. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: In terms of the standing orders, this is a fair and reasonable amendment that the Manager of Opposition Business has put forward. It should be adopted by the government. They should not be frightened. It should be carried by this House.