




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

MOTIONS

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (6.41 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Kawana. I say at the outset that all of us on this side of the House have a high regard for the position of the Speaker and we have a high regard for the current occupant of that post in this parliament—a very high regard—because he does a very good job in balancing both sides of this House during what can sometimes be very raucous debate at times in the parliament. As a former deputy speaker of the Queensland parliament, I have firsthand understanding of the challenges that are involved presiding over this chamber, because sometimes things move very quickly. A motion is put, we are about to put a motion, a motion is passed and people are trying to change those motions. It is not an easy task to make a ruling, but members engage in vigorous debate in this place which could dissolve into less edifying behaviour if we fail to respect the Speaker and their rulings, often during very difficult and challenging times as I believe the situation presented itself with the courtesy that the Speaker showed the member for Toowoomba South, who wanted to move the amendment.

I look at other parliaments around the world where proceedings can sometimes descend into violence and compare that with the manner in which the Speaker makes sure that we conduct ourselves, as do the Deputy Speaker and the temporary speakers. Both sides of the House do an excellent job here in Queensland and I am resolutely committed to abiding by the rulings, particularly in difficult circumstances, that the Speaker makes. Without the Speaker, the parliament cannot operate. The authority of the Speaker must be respected and is essential to the operation of the parliament, and that is why dissent motions need to be carefully considered. In this respect, I find that moving a dissent motion when we are establishing a Supermarket Pricing Select Committee which will be bipartisan with six members from both sides of the House is deemed to be used as a political football to now move a dissent motion against the Speaker's ruling. I think it shows an opposition that has lost its way about what is important to the people of Queensland.

Mr Langbroek: This is not relevant.

Ms GRACE: I believe it is relevant because we moved a Supermarket Pricing Select Committee—

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

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

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, it is very clear that in a dissent motion the debate must be about the issues of the motion itself, not debating the issue about which the amendments might have been moved.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I think I have allowed pretty broad latitude for other speakers who have also spoken beyond the actual motion of dissent itself. I will continue to listen, but I thank you for your point of order, member for Surfers Paradise.

Ms GRACE: The situation that we find ourselves in is that we have moved a motion regarding the establishment of a select committee, known as the Supermarket Pricing Select Committee, and in that motion there were very broad areas that that committee could examine. For example, the first line says—

- (a) examine the causes and effects of increased supermarket prices; and—
- that is a very broad examination that that committee would have the power to do—
- (b) identify opportunities to increase transparency in the supermarket sector ...

Mr Speaker, at the time the question that the motion be agreed to was actually put and out of courtesy you enabled a possible amendment to be put and the amendment, I would advocate, went further than the motion as originally put and changed it in line with your decision and your ruling. In fact, there were parts of that amendment that were put which I would suggest were very difficult to have authenticated—issues like higher electricity prices in the nation since Callide C went offline.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I bring you back. I think this has happened in the past during this debate where a link has tried to be made between the possible amendment and matters. I will allow some latitude, but we do have to get back to the motion at its core, and that is the dissent motion and the procedural arrangements around that.

Ms GRACE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that, but I think authentication was a part in relation to your possible ruling. In relation to the Speaker's ruling at the time, I have reviewed the transcript and I know that the Speaker used his discretion and allowed the member for Toowoomba South to attempt to move his amendment. The Speaker did not have to do that. He carefully examined that he requested the member for Toowoomba South's amendment to be relevant and explained to the member why it was not relevant in terms of venturing into matters that were outside the intention of the motion and, I believe, failed to even have the ability to have them authenticated. The Speaker was at all times clear in his guidance and fair in the exercise of his authority.

As we all know, there are processes when a Speaker loses the confidence of this House. The Speaker has the full confidence of this House and the manner in which the Speaker conducted himself with regard to this matter was completely correct and the dissent motion is, in my view, not something that we are going to vote in favour of. The member for Kawana, on the other hand, took umbrage to the ruling and has moved a dissent motion before the House to which we are speaking. I believe that this motion should not be supported. This side of the House will not support the motion. The Speaker, when you look at the transcript on page 557, said—

I gave the courtesy to the member to commence the contribution. I had already started to put the question—I was not required to do that; I gave some latitude—and I am not accepting the motion on that basis.

We accept that ruling, we support that ruling and we do not believe that this dissent motion has any substance. We will be opposing this motion.