

QUEENSLAND



HANSARD

Legislative Assembly

FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FIFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, IN THE FORTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1995

TUESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1995

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

Pursuant to the Proclamation by Her Excellency the Governor, dated 20 June 1995, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 10 a.m. in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk read the Proclamation.

COMMISSION TO OPEN PARLIAMENT

The Clerk acquainted the House that Her Excellency the Governor, not being able conveniently to be present in person this day, had been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued under the public seal of the State, appointing the Honourable Wayne Keith Goss the Commissioner in order to the opening and holding of this session of Parliament.

The Commissioner so appointed being seated on the dais, and the Clerk having read the Commission—

The COMMISSIONER (Honourable Wayne Keith Goss—Logan): Honourable members, I have it in command from Her

Excellency the Governor to let you know that as soon as the members of the Legislative Assembly have been sworn, the causes of this Parliament being called together will be declared to you: And it being necessary that a Speaker be first chosen, it is Her Excellency's pleasure that you proceed to the election of one of your number to be your Speaker, and that you present such person so chosen to Her Excellency the Governor, at such time and place as Her Excellency shall appoint.

I produce a Commission under the public seal of the State, empowering the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk or either of them to administer to any member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the oath or affirmation of allegiance to Her Majesty that is required by law to be taken or made and subscribed by every member before the member is permitted to sit or vote in the Legislative Assembly, which I will now ask the Clerk to read.

The Clerk read the Commission.

RETURN OF WRITS

The Clerk informed the House that the writs for the various electoral districts had been returned to him, severally endorsed as follows—

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| Albert: William Francis Baumann | Kurwongbah: Margaret Rosemary Woodgate |
| Archerfield: Leonard Arthur Ardill | Lockyer: Andrew Anthony Fitzgerald |
| Ashgrove: Demetrios Fouras | Logan: Wayne Keith Goss |
| Aspley: John Nelson Goss | Lytton: Thomas James Burns |
| Barambah: Trevor John Perrett | Mackay: Timothy Sean Mulherin |
| Barron River: Lynette Robyn Warwick | Mansfield: Francis Edward Carroll |
| Beaudesert: Kevin Rowson Lingard | Maroochydore: Fiona Stuart Simpson |
| Brisbane Central: Peter Douglas Beattie | Maryborough: Robert Henry Dollin |
| Broadwater: Allan Maxwell Grice | Merrimac: Robert Joseph Quinn |
| Bulimba: Patrick Douglas Purcell | Mirani: George Edward Malone |
| Bundaberg: Clement Bernard Campbell | Moggill: David John Hopetoun Watson |
| Bundamba: Robert James Gibbs | Mooloolah: Bruce Edric Laming |
| Burdekin: Mark David Stoneman | Mount Coot-tha: Wendy Marjorie Edmond |
| Burleigh: Judith Margaret Gamin | Mount Gravatt: Judith Caroline Spence |
| Burnett: Douglas John Slack | Mount Isa: Anthony McGrady |
| Caboolture: Jonathan Harold Sullivan | Mount Ommaney: Robert Malcolm Harper |
| Cairns: Keith Ernest De Lacy | Mulgrave: Naomi Kate Wynn Wilson |
| Callide: Diane Elizabeth McCauley | Mundingburra: Kenneth Henry Davies |
| Caloundra: Joan Mary Sheldon | Murrumba: Dean MacMillan Wells |
| Capalaba: James Peter Elder | Nerang: Raymond Thomas Connor |
| Charters Towers: Robert Alan Mitchell | Nicklin: Neil John Turner |
| Chatsworth: Terence Michael Mackenroth | Noosa: Bruce William Davidson |
| Chermside: Terence Boland Sullivan | Nudgee: Neil Stuart Roberts |
| Clayfield: Santo Santoro | Redcliffe: Raymond Keith Hollis |
| Cleveland: Darryl James Briskey | Redlands: John Joseph Hegarty |
| Cook: Stephen Dominic Bredhauer | Rockhampton: Robert Evan Schwarten |
| Crows Nest: Theo Russell Cooper | Sandgate: Gordon Richard Nuttall |
| Cunningham: Jannion Anthony Elliott | South Brisbane: Anna Maria Bligh |
| Currumbin: Merri Rose | Southport: Michael Desmond Veivers |
| Everton: Rodney Jon Welford | Springwood: Lucas Scott Woolmer |
| Ferny Grove: Glen Richard Milliner | Sunnybank: Stephen Robertson |
| Fitzroy: James Pearce | Surfers Paradise: Robert Edward Borbidge |
| Gladstone: Elizabeth Anne Cunningham | Tablelands: Thomas John George Gilmore |
| Greenslopes: Theodore Paul Radke | Thuringowa: Kenneth Victor McElligott |
| Gregory: Vaughan Gregory Johnson | Toowoomba North: Graham John Healy |
| Gympie: Leonard William Stephan | Toowoomba South: Michael James Horan |
| Hervey Bay: William George Nunn | Townsville: Geoffrey Norman Smith |
| Hinchinbrook: Marcus Hosking Rowell | Warrego: Howard William Thomas Hobbs |
| Inala: Heinrich Palaszczuk | Warwick: Lawrence James Springborg |
| Indooroopilly: Denver Edward Beanland | Waterford: Thomas Alfred Barton |
| Ipswich: David John Hamill | Western Downs: Brian George Littleproud |
| Ipswich West: Donald Wallace Livingstone | Whitsunday: Lorraine Rita Bird |
| Kallangur: Kenneth William Hayward | Woodridge: William Theodore D'Arcy |
| Kedron: Paul Joseph Braddy | Yeronga: Matthew Joseph Foley |
| Keppel: Vincent Patrick Lester | |

MEMBERS SWORN

The Clerk then administered the oath or affirmation of allegiance to the following members, who thereupon subscribed the roll—

Ardill, Leonard Arthur
 Baumann, William Francis
 Beanland, Denver Edward
 Bird, Lorraine Rita
 Bligh, Anna Maria
 Borbidge, Robert Edward
 Bredhauer, Stephen Dominic
 Briskey, Darryl James
 Campbell, Clement Bernard
 Carroll, Francis Edward
 Connor, Raymond Thomas
 Cooper, Theo Russell
 Cunningham, Elizabeth Anne
 D'Arcy, William Theodore
 Davidson, Bruce William
 Dollin, Robert Henry
 Elliott, Jannion Anthony
 Fitzgerald, Andrew Anthony
 Fouras, Demetrios
 Gamin, Judith Margaret
 Gilmore, Thomas John George
 Goss, John Nelson
 Grice, Allan Maxwell
 Harper, Robert Malcolm
 Healy, Graham John
 Hegarty, John Joseph
 Hobbs, Howard William Thomas
 Hollis, Raymond Keith
 Horan, Michael James
 Johnson, Vaughan Gregory
 Laming, Bruce Edric
 Lester, Vincent Patrick
 Lingard, Kevin Rowson
 Littleproud, Brian George
 Livingstone, Donald Wallace
 Malone, George Edward
 McCauley, Diane Elizabeth
 Mitchell, Robert Alan
 Mulherin, Timothy Sean
 Nunn, William George
 Nuttall, Gordon Richard
 Palaszczuk, Heinrich

Pearce, James
 Perrett, Trevor John
 Purcell, Patrick Douglas
 Quinn, Robert Joseph
 Radke, Theodore Paul
 Roberts, Neil Stuart
 Robertson, Stephen
 Rose, Merri
 Rowell, Marcus Hosking
 Santoro, Santo
 Schwarten, Robert Evan
 Sheldon, Joan Mary
 Simpson, Fiona Stuart
 Slack, Douglas John
 Smith, Geoffrey Norman
 Spence, Judith Caroline
 Springborg, Lawrence James
 Stephan, Leonard William
 Stoneman, Mark David
 Sullivan, Jonathan Harold
 Sullivan, Terence Boland
 Turner, Neil John
 Veivers, Michael Desmond
 Warwick, Lynette Robyn
 Watson, David John Hopetoun
 Welford, Rodney Jon
 Wells, Dean MacMillan
 Wilson, Naomi Kate Wynn
 Woolmer, Lucas Scott

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Clerk having called upon the longest serving member, not being a Minister, to preside—

Mr J. A. Elliott (Cunningham) took the chair as the Presiding Member.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! Honourable members, before calling for nominations for Speaker, I draw the attention of honourable members to the Standing Orders, which provide that any member present in the Chamber may be proposed as Speaker and that every proposal shall be seconded. Any member who has been proposed as Speaker is required to indicate whether the proposal is acceptable. When all proposals have been made, seconded and accepted, debate may ensue. Debate shall be relevant to the question. Speeches shall not

exceed five minutes for each member. I remind honourable members that the provisions of the Standing Orders apply to this debate. I now call for nominations.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (10.40 a.m.): I move—

"That the Member for Ashgrove, Mr Jim Fouras, do take the chair of the House as Speaker."

Mr Lingard: You aren't a leader's bootlace.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It's a pair of boots you'll never get to try on.

Honourable members, in February 1990 and November 1992 I nominated the member for Ashgrove for this position for the first and second term of this Government. I do so again today after Mr Fouras' advice to me this morning that he would accept such a nomination and with the support of a meeting of the parliamentary Labor Party this morning.

Jim Fouras has the experience to perform the important role of Speaker. He has been even handed in the role of Speaker and he has been committed to the maintenance of Parliament as an institution which has, and which deserves, the respect of the public. He has served the Queensland community and this Parliament to the best of his ability and will continue to do so if honourable members support this motion.

Jim Fouras migrated from Greece to Australia at the age of 10 and has made a contribution to the community in which he has chosen to live. Australia is a multicultural society and Queensland is proud of its expanding multicultural community. A graduate of the University of Queensland, Jim Fouras worked as a research chemist and a marketing economist prior to receiving Labor Party endorsement in 1977 as the candidate—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I note the usual commitment of the Opposition to the smooth working of Parliament.

Jim Fouras worked as a marketing economist prior to receiving Labor Party endorsement in 1977 as the candidate for South Brisbane, to which electorate he was elected and then represented until 1986. During that time, he served as a Temporary Chairman of Committees and was a member of the Select Committee of Subordinate Legislation. In addition, he represented Queensland at the Australian Constitutional

Convention, as well as variously holding the positions of Opposition spokesman for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs, Opposition spokesman for Industry, Small Business and Technology, and other positions.

From 1986 to 1989, Mr Fouras was employed as a senior consultant to the Federal Government's Human Rights Commission inquiry into homeless children, helping to provide that national inquiry with a Queensland perspective. In 1989, he was elected as the member for Ashgrove, and in February 1990 he was elected as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He has also served as the Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, the Parliamentary Service Commission and the Printing Committee.

We all have our strengths and weaknesses. However, one characteristic of Jim Fouras with which most people agree is his basic decency and the lengths to which he has gone to be fair and to be seen to be fair. If anything, some members have tried to take advantage of this, making the position of Speaker often difficult in recent years.

It is unfortunate for the operation of Parliament that the Opposition has chosen frequently to deliberately target Mr Fouras in the Chamber and in the media, questioning his ability and his integrity. In fact, in this very debate in 1992, he was attacked by the Opposition when the Deputy Leader of the National Party launched a vicious attack of scurrilous personal accusations against Mr Fouras. A month later, the Opposition Leader moved a motion of dissent against a ruling by Mr Fouras and said in that debate that the Speaker subjected Mr Borbidge to "undue censorship". He went on to say—

"It seems quite clear that there is simply one rule for Government members and another rule for Opposition members."

There have been 10 such dissent motions moved against the Speaker by the Opposition. However, Jim Fouras has received community support as a local member and as Speaker.

As we embark upon what promises to be a challenging Parliament for all members, in the interests of the Parliament and, indeed, the public, it is incumbent on all members to give greater cooperation to the Speaker.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Youth) (10.49 a.m.): As I have done on the last two occasions, I am pleased to second the nomination of Jim Fouras. Jim is a mate of mine. I have known him for years. In 1977, I

talked him into running for this Parliament. As I have said on a number of occasions in this place, and it is on the *Hansard* record, I have always found Jim to be a great family man, a man with a soft heart and a bloke who tries to do the right thing. As the Premier said quite clearly today, when Jim has tried to do the right thing in this place, some of those members opposite who are making the most noise—the ones who have done everything they can to stop him from doing the right thing here—have done everything they possibly can to undermine his authority in the chair. Honourable members can play politics, but the man in that chair represents the sense of fair play both in this place and to the people in the community. Every time the members of the Opposition create uproar they bring this institution a little further down in the eyes of the public. In the true tradition of our Westminster system of democracy, we believe in the impartiality of the Speaker; but in the true Australian tradition we all reserve the right to give the umpire a kick—to give the referee a kick—and I reserve the right to give the Speaker one. I have done that on a number of occasions.

The last time I seconded the nomination of Speaker, I said in my speech that I was unfairly treated by a number of Speakers, including one Mr Lingard who did not read the Standing Orders and who misused this place to snivel his way into Cabinet in order to be one of Joh's men. He used and abused this place and never tried to run it fairly. In comparison with Mr Lingard, Jimmy Fouras stands high because of the way that he has tried to be fair and honest; never once did the member opposite try to be fair and honest. I will go back a bit further than the fellow from Fassifern. The honourable member's predecessor in the position stood up and said, "I'm here to do the Government's business." It was not "for fair play"; it was not "to do the right thing". After being elected as Speaker, he went on the record as saying, "I'm here to be Joh's man. I'm here to do what the National Party wants me to do." That was his way of acting fairly and in accordance with the rules.

Let me make it clear—I am no fan of authority and never have been. I have had my fights with Speakers in the past and I will have them again. As I said in my speech last time, I do not agree with every ruling that Jimmy Fouras gives. I would not mind betting that I said then—and I still say it now—that I would not mind being Speaker for six months. Half of the members opposite would be back on the farm; they would not be here. This place would

run smoothly and they would all obey the Standing Orders.

The last tough Speaker or Chairman of Committees—and some honourable members would remember him—was Bill Lickiss. One night Bill Lickiss sat in the chair and sent out 12 of us one after the other.

An Opposition member: Was that in the Boer War?

Mr BURNS: No, I am just referring back to when members opposite were in Government. Bill Lickiss just rolled the members out, one after the other. There was no fair play. If anyone stood up and said, "I rise to a point of order", he would say, "You're out", and out the member went.

Jimmy Fouras has given members opposite more than a fair go—more than they deserve—and he deserves the support of this House.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Does the honourable member accept the nomination?

Mr FOURAS (Ashgrove) (10.53 a.m.): I accept the nomination.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.54 a.m.): This morning we read in the *Courier-Mail* the statement of principle from the so-called Premier of this State in respect of the Speakership. Mr Goss said that he saw no possibility of any change in Labor's position and that there would be no late decision to accept Mr Fouras as Speaker. Just in case the *Courier-Mail* got it wrong, I will turn to the *Australian*, which stated that Mr Goss said yesterday that Mr Fouras had to accept that no job is for life and that the majority of caucus decided that it was time for a change.

Today we are seeing the total humiliation of the member for Logan by the member for Ashgrove. We are seeing a Government without leadership, a Premier without authority. He is a lame-duck leader leading a lame-duck Government. The compromise deal that was cooked up by the factional leaders in this place last night resulted in the humiliating backdown by the member for Logan. Yesterday, on ABC radio, we heard Mr Goss' version of a seance: he was saying, "Jim, Jim, where are you? I am trying to make contact, mate." Then we witnessed the Labor Party's next strategic gem, which resembled the search for Elvis. They looked for him everywhere. What happened, Mr Presiding Member? Late last night, they found out where he was and put a note under the door. We witnessed the inconsistencies and hypocrisy of the member opposite. Last night

on television, the Premier said that Jim owed his employment to the Labor Party and that they had kept him in a job all these years—despite the fact that they had dumped him twice.

A couple of weeks ago, at the "love-in" at the Sunshine Coast, the Premier said, "I am sure Jim is not a Labor rat." The real reason for this backdown that we are seeing today by the member for Logan is that he knows that, if the member for Ashgrove had been nominated by a non-Government member and if the member for Logan had proceeded with the caucus nomination, not only would he have lost the ballot but also a group of members on the Government side of the House would have abstained or voted for the member for Ashgrove. Today, the Premier was confronted with the very real prospect of a revolt in his own ranks, with his own troops deserting him.

Mr Stoneman: It will come.

Mr BORBIDGE: It will come; it is only a matter of time. We witnessed a grubby, factional, backroom deal that lacked the support of a crucial number of members sitting opposite in this place. Several of the Premier's own members were prepared to ditch the Premier's choice in the ballot today if it meant putting the member for Ashgrove into the Speaker's chair.

The problem for the member for Logan today is that, by backing down, he has signed his own political death warrant. He will never again be able to sack a Minister, because he or she will try the same trick. He or she will say, "If you want to get rid of me, I will stand on my dig and you will not be able to govern."

That humiliating backdown occurred so that the Premier can cling to power in this State, despite the fact that over 53 per cent of Queenslanders rejected him and that he is in this place only by a virtue of a majority of 16 in Mundingburra, which result is now before the courts. The Premier will never be able to sack a Minister. How is he going to handle the member for Woodridge in the matter of the south coast motorway? What will he do if the member for Woodridge says, "I'll take a leaf out of Jim Fouras' book on how to deal with the member for Logan?" The Premier has hamstrung himself and forfeited totally his ability to lead.

Today, the member for Ashgrove, Mr Fouras, has forced total humiliation on the Premier. Mr Fouras has made him look silly. The Premier and the caucus dumped him. At every available opportunity, the Premier

sought to intimidate him in regard to his intentions. The member for Logan said that he was sure Mr Fouras was not a Labor rat and that Mr Fouras owed his living and income to the Labor Party. The Premier did a deal so that he could keep some of the rejected deadwood in the Cabinet. In that factional, backroom deal, he traded off the Speaker's chair.

Today is significant because this is the day the Parliament reclaims the Speakership. It is the day that a backroom, factional deal has been rejected. For that reason, the Opposition will not be opposing the nomination.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11 a.m.): Certainly, what a day we have seen in this House! In the five years that I have been a member of this House, I have never seen such a blatant, humiliating backdown by this Government and this Premier as this backdown over the position of Speaker.

A Government member interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: I assure my friend that it is a lot better than he could pen. It seems that the Premier is now little more than a dying fish, flopping and backflipping on the beach with a hook in his mouth.

Today's decision by the Premier to support the nomination of Jim Fouras as Speaker comes after two weeks during which the Premier and the member for Ashgrove have stared at each other like two gunfighters. Not only did the Premier blink first but he also dropped to his knees, his guns dropped in the dirt, and he certainly begged for forgiveness. The Premier has ridden roughshod over Jim Fouras for the last six years and has described him privately as "weak and vacillating". None of the Government members has come out and said that that is not correct. Jim Fouras has stared down the Premier in a classic political showdown. If before today the Premier has been consuming buckets of castor oil, then today he has had an intravenous injection of 44 gallons.

This backdown by the Premier raises myriad questions about how much authority he now has as Premier. Shall we just look at the events of the past few weeks? Certainly over the past few months the Premier has had more than his fair share of run-ins with the member for Ashgrove, and he has decided that he would rather have his factional mate, Henry Palaszczuk, as Speaker than the factional independent Jim Fouras. In other words, there was no move by the Premier and

the Labor Party to have an independent Speaker in this House; it was a factional deal.

We in the Opposition did want an independent member—and, I do believe, so did Mr Fouras—as an independent Speaker. Unfortunately, the Premier did not believe that that was the way democracy should go. We heard Tom Burns carrying on about democracy. What a joke! He does not know what the word means, and he certainly could not spell it. He was giving members a lecture on democracy in this House. We would have seen democracy in this House if Government members had continued to support Mr Fouras as Speaker. But that was not to be the case. The Premier did not want him, and Government members did not want him. Then today, members have seen this great backdown. Of course, the Premier does have egg on his face. What did he describe this man as? A political rat; a man who did not have the integrity that the Labor Party thought he should have to be the Speaker! The Premier has now had to back down and put Mr Fouras in the chair. Of course, we in the Opposition support the nomination that Mr Fouras take the chair.

One wonders how this morning the Premier could stand up and speak in the way he did to support the man whom he personally, privately, on the airwaves and on TV stabbed in the back. One has to ask: what is going to happen to Mr Henry Palaszczuk, who was democratically elected in the Government's own caucus and party room, and, of course, Mr Steve Bredhauer? What is now going to happen to the Socialist Left? Obviously, it has been sidelined again in another great democratic bid by the Labor Party, headed by this Premier. It would be very interesting to know exactly what the ALP caucus will do about this and how solid is going to be the stand for the Premier in his own party when we know—and as the Opposition Leader has indicated—the number of people on the Government side of the House who were quite prepared to vote informal had Mr Fouras not been nominated.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You couldn't name one, and you know it.

Mrs SHELDON: Those members know who they are, and if any of them wants to stand up, he or she should feel free to do so; however, they would not have the guts. This was all done behind the back door and through phone calls to us, and they know it. Would the seven faceless men and women on the Government side like to stand up? That would be a very interesting little scenario.

Jim Fouras has taken the high moral ground in this debate and continues on the high moral ground. That is why I certainly support his nomination. The backflip by the Premier today is just another example of how badly the Labor Party has been operating since the election. There have been moves in the back room by Messrs Gibbs and Mackenroth to work out a deal to replace the Premier and the Deputy Premier and to ensure that the new Minister for Health goes no further up the political ladder. Members of the Socialist Left have been publicly humiliated and snubbed by the Premier in his new Cabinet and now in relation to the position of Deputy Speaker.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (11.06 a.m.): I can understand why the Leader of the Liberal Party is always bleating in the press for more staff, more space, more of everything. Clearly, it is because when she has to come into this place and talk on a subject such as this, she has to have a speech prepared by some lackey in her office.

I welcome the return of the member for Ashgrove to the Speaker's chair where he will continue to do a great job. I do not think that Opposition members will be talking about him in glowing terms because they are the ones who create havoc in this Chamber. By the way they carry on, particularly during question time, they are the ones who make this place a laughing-stock. For the entire hour of question time, they provoke the Speaker. I hope they have learned some lessons.

Today, we saw the Leader of the Opposition come in and crack a few jokes. I hope his good humour continues throughout the three-year term of this Parliament. Those Opposition members who are continually bleating for more support and for more room should remember the treatment that Labor members received when they were in Opposition. I refer to the sort of treatment Labor members received from the member for Beaudesert, with his sarcasm and unfairness, while he was the occupant of the chair. It was a pleasant change to see the last two Speakers that we have had in this House—the member for Ashgrove and, before him, the member for Isis, who went to the Speaker's chair with a lot of lead in his saddlebags but performed a remarkable task as Speaker. He was completely fair and independent. He did a great job, which was continued by the member for Ashgrove.

I am disappointed that my neighbour, the member for Inala, is not going to occupy the chair because he, too, would have done a

great job as Speaker. As Deputy Speaker, he has shown himself to be somebody who knows the rules and applies them fairly in this Chamber. Nobody can say that the member for Ashgrove did not also apply the rules very clearly. On a number of occasions, the member for Ashgrove has enjoyed the displeasure of members on the Government front bench because he has called them to account. As I said, the member for Inala would also have done a great job.

The member for Inala and I received no support when we were in Opposition. In fact, we prepared the report on the Wolffdene dam—a 12-page report which contained a great deal of detail—without any support staff. Members opposite who bleat about having no support—

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! Would the honourable member please stick to the subject?

A Government member interjected.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! The honourable member will not cast reflections on the Chair. The Standing Orders indicate clearly that an honourable member may speak to the subject for five minutes. This has nothing to do with the Wolffdene dam.

Mr ARDILL: Mr Presiding Member, I mentioned the Wolffdene dam in passing. I am talking about the amount of support received by backbenchers in this Parliament. It is nil. We write our own speeches. We do not use—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ARDILL: On no occasion have I ever read a speech in this House that was prepared by anyone other than me. I have never read somebody else's speech.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! If the member does not return to the matter under discussion, I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr ARDILL: Mr Presiding Member, I am talking about the procedures of this House under the Speaker. We have never had any support such as that which the Deputy Leader of the Coalition is demanding. Why does the honourable member not go into the office of the Leader of the Opposition, as our deputy had to, and work from there? Certainly, the members of this House need greater support in their electorates, and more so in the larger electorates than the smaller ones. That is where we need additional support—not in this House.

Time expired.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (11.11 a.m.): We have talked about democracy, but I would like to talk about hypocrisy. I look forward to the next time the Opposition moves a motion of dissent against a Speaker's ruling. And it will do so again—just as it moved 10 motions of dissent against rulings of Speaker Jim Fouras, the member for Ashgrove, during previous Parliaments.

I will refer to some of the things that members opposite said during the member for Ashgrove's time as Speaker. In May 1990, the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Borbidge, stated—

"That unfair and blatant breach of the recent practices of this House is, unfortunately, at the heart of the reason why relations between the Opposition and the Chair have been strained.

We do not seek confrontation, but we cannot be expected to have our rights in this Parliament eroded by unilateral decree."

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr CAMPBELL: The Leader of the Opposition was talking about the Speaker. He stated further—

"Indeed, the handling of this matter has, more than any other single issue, placed almost irreparable strains on relations between the Opposition and Mr Speaker."

When the Opposition moved these motions of dissent, when members opposite were criticising the Speaker, members such as me stood up in support of the correctness of the Speaker's rulings. In future, in question time, when members opposite question the impartiality and the fairness of the Speaker, I will remind them very clearly of their words today.

The PRESIDING MEMBER: Order! There being no further proposals and no further speakers to the motion, I now call upon Mr Fouras to take the chair.

Mr Fouras submitted himself to the pleasure of the House and, on being called, was conducted to the chair by the mover and the seconder.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I humbly acknowledge the great honour that the House has been pleased to confer upon me in choosing me to be Speaker, an office which I will endeavour at all times to fill with dignity and impartiality. I give a commitment to all members of this House that I will carry out the duties of Speaker to the best of my ability

and that I will ensure balanced debate and fairness in rulings. With the help of honourable members, I will also further reform this House and its procedures to make it a Parliament that will be admired and respected. Thank you.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.14 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Government and members of the parliamentary Labor Party, let me say that, despite the bitter and snide contribution to this debate by the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am just talking about the contributions of the Opposition. The bitterness of losing clearly runs deep.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, the Leader of the Opposition is right; we suffered a 7 per cent swing, and here we are!

Mr Speaker, to return to the subject—despite the nature of the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition, Government members wish you well in what is a difficult role. I think it is clear, Mr Speaker—and it is no doubt clear to you—that the offer of support made to you today by the parliamentary Labor Party is one that is made in the best long-term interests of stability of Government, something which is important to the people of this State.

Mr Speaker, we are determined to continue as the Government of this State and to continue delivering on the things that we believe are important and the policies and principles that we shared with you going into the last election. It is also interesting to note that the Opposition does not have a candidate capable enough to be put forward for the position of Speaker.

Mr Speaker, in the interests of the smooth running of this Parliament, and given the nature of this Parliament compared with that of the last two Parliaments, I trust that we will not see a continuation of the cynical sabotage and undermining of the position of the Chair that we saw in the many dissent motions moved against your rulings during the term of the last Parliament. Mr Speaker, the task will not be an easy one. We wish you well.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (11.17 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the coalition, I want to extend to you congratulations on your re-election as Speaker of this Parliament. It has been an extraordinary couple of weeks.

Mr Speaker, can I suggest that today's events may not have unfolded as they have if the coalition had not been prepared to give careful consideration to all the options.

Government members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: And don't tempt me to say more!

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that your job in this Parliament will be a difficult and tense one. We all want a Parliament that works and a Parliament that is robust, because a tame Parliament is not necessarily either a democratic Parliament or a fair one. When the numbers are so tight, it is obviously going to be very important that every effort is made by you, Mr Speaker, to ensure that the Parliament works properly and that both the Government and the Opposition treat the Parliament with due respect.

Briefly, I want to say to the honourable member for Logan, who is sitting opposite, that it is clear he has learned nothing.

Mr Cooper: Arrogant as ever.

Mr BORBIDGE: Arrogant as ever.

This is the first day of the new Parliament and we are seeing the same sort of abuse and nonsense that we saw on the last day of the last Parliament. Mr Speaker, if the Honourable the Premier took offence at some of the words I used in my speech, I apologise for quoting him, because they were his words, his statements and his utterances over the past two or three weeks.

Mr Speaker, we wish you well. We assure you of our cooperation in making this Parliament work. I would also say that in order for this Parliament to work we are going to have to see a degree of goodwill and cooperation in this Chamber, which regrettably—

Mr De Lacy: As usual!

Mr BORBIDGE: I remember what the honourable member for Cairns said on election night. He should hang his head in shame! I remember what he said on national television. That is the standard of his debate and his contribution to Queensland politics.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The description was spot-on, was it? It is quite an achievement to turn a safe Labor seat such as Cairns into a marginal one. Not many people could do it, but the Treasurer has been able to.

Mr Speaker, no doubt there will be many more such debates in the future. Again, I offer my very sincere congratulations. The coalition

congratulates you on your election to this very high and ancient office.

Mr SPEAKER: I thank both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their kind remarks on my election to the position of Speaker.

PRESENTATION OF MR SPEAKER

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.20 a.m.): I desire to inform honourable members that Her Excellency the Governor will receive the House for the

purpose of presenting the Speaker to Her Excellency at Government House today at 3.45 p.m.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (11.20 a.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 2.12 p.m. tomorrow in the late Legislative Council Chamber."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.20 a.m.