



Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeneey

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2014

MOTION: AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.30 am): Can I first recognise the abject cowardice and weak-kneed—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Can I first recognise the abject cowardice of the opposition and the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Deputy Premier, I find that unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr SEENEY: Okay, I withdraw. Mr Deputy Speaker, we have heard some confected outrage from the crossbenches in this House today and I think it is important that the facts are placed on the record. The CLA recognised the extraordinary amount of time that was taken up by this House in the traditional division process that we used—where the number of divisions and the time it took to count them added up to an extraordinary amount of time over a parliamentary year. We looked at other voting systems and we decided to undertake a trial of a voting system that was aimed at making the operation of the House more efficient. At the end of that trial, we considered how the trial had worked, and it was agreed by everybody on the CLA who considered it that the trial had demonstrated that there was still an extraordinary amount of time being taken up because of the number of people who had to stand up and call out their vote. It was also apparent that some of those members were using that moment as an opportunity to grandstand, particularly the member for Nicklin. He would use that opportunity to grandstand on particular issues.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find those comments offensive. He has indicated that I have used that opportunity to grandstand. I find those comments offensive. They are untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has asked that they be withdrawn.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw. The arguments that have been advanced—that somehow or other the crossbenches are being disadvantaged and that they are being denied something that is available to all other members of the House—are quite clearly not true. The opposite is the case. Under the voting system that we introduced as a trial, I as the member for Callide do not get an opportunity to stand and call my vote but the member for Nicklin does and the member for Gladstone does. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you took the argument that has been advanced by both of those members, then you would be putting forward a case for the whole 89 members of this parliament to stand and call their vote. Every member of the House would stand up each time there was a division and they would have the opportunity to do what the member for Nicklin does. That is clearly and patently ridiculous, but that is the argument that is being advanced by the member for Nicklin—

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Those comments are untrue and they are offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn. That is not the argument I have put and that

the *Hansard* record will show. I ask that those comments be withdrawn. They are offensive and they are wrong.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken offence. Would the Deputy Premier withdraw?

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw.

Mr Wellington: It shows how petty they are.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nicklin, you raised a point of order. You took offence and the Deputy Premier has withdrawn. That is the end of it.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, can I put it another way. If the argument that is being advanced is that any particular member should have a right to stand and call their vote, then that right should extend to every member of the House, but of course it cannot. There are a number of statutory positions in this parliament, as there are in every parliament, and the statutory positions that are important in this particular case are the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip. Those statutory officers have a responsibility to report to the parliament because they are officers of the parliament and part of their role is to ensure the division is conducted properly and the result is recorded. That is part of their role, and the Clerk or the Clerk's representative also has a role in the parliament. Those roles are reflected in the changes that are being suggested in the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House.

The motion that has been moved by the Leader of the House in no way takes away any right or privilege that any member of this House has or has had. I repeat: it does not take away any right or privilege that any member has. For many, many years nobody got to do what the members opposing this motion are arguing they should be able to continue to do—nobody got to do that. We all came here and stood along the walls and the whips had to count us. Nobody had the right to do that. So it is a confected argument that is being mounted against this motion and it is important that the facts are put on the record.

The CLA undertook a suggestion to reform the way divisions are conducted in this place. We introduced a trial and we examined that trial as it developed. We then took a decision to introduce a final voting system, and that final voting system is being formalised by the motion that the Leader of the House has moved. That motion should be supported by every member of the House.