

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 26 May 2010, Page 248

### ELECTORAL PROCESS

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (20:03):**

I will agree with 90 per cent of what the Hon. Bernie Finnigan has said. When I saw the terms of reference and the amendment, I thought it was a reasonable amendment. I was surprised that 'any other relevant matter' was not included in these terms of reference. I did approach one of the other crossbenchers and commented that I thought it was perhaps a little one-sided that we were only going to look into the 2010 election when, in fact, there had been allegations in the 2002 election, I think—or 2006, whatever—that other people, other parties, participated in similar exercises as what we saw at the 2010 election.

However, I did have a conversation with the Hon. Bernie Finnigan and I asked him if he would consider changing the first part of the amendment from 'and previous elections' to be specific about the 2006, 2002 election. He indicated that he would be open to that but I notice that it has not been changed. The implications of having 'and previous elections' is that if the Labor Party wanted to drag out this particular select committee and influence the results or the outcome or just take their sweet time, we could go back 150 years.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Well, we could—we could go back. We all know that there is no morality in politics, don't we? Morality is up to philosophers not politicians. My concern is that the Hon. Bernie Finnigan did not see anything wrong with amending that and then did not amend it.

This is basically a cheap political stunt by him. If he really wanted an honest and open select committee and the Labor Party was more than willing to have this inquiry into the election because there was nothing to hide, then it would have made sense to get the support of the house and the crossbenchers, and that simple amendment would have been made and we would have felt quite comfortable with it. However, that did not happen.

The second point is that if we are also concerned about any other relevant matter it could have been a separate amendment. It could have been supported and I certainly would have supported it. On the face of all that, I raise concerns about this amendment and how it was drawn up. I did seek advice from people (not from the Liberal Party) who know how these things work and the concern was that the phrase 'and previous elections' in this amendment is very broad and one could go back 150 years if one really wanted to.

I was going to support this amendment when I first saw it. However, after hearing the Hon. Bernie Finnigan's rave, that if the cross-benchers don't agree to the Labor Party amendment—which is deficient I believe—and that therefore crossbenchers do not think for themselves and are somehow aligned—

The Hon. P. Holloway interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: What!—given that an opportunity was put to the honourable mover of this amendment to make a reasonable amendment to make it acceptable, and that it was not done tells a story in itself.

The Hon. P. Holloway: It's qualified by (a), (b), (c) and (d). It can only be for further elections in relation to those matters.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Hang on. No, that is actually not the advice that I got from an independent source. The meaning of this amendment 'and previous elections' could mean every election that we have ever had. The Hon. Bernie Finnigan made the point himself that he would want to see—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Are we having a debate here or what? What are we doing?

The PRESIDENT: Order! You've got the floor.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Thank you.

The PRESIDENT: If you cease responding to interjections then you will find that it works a lot better.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: I didn't respond—I don't think. Anyway, 'and previous elections' could have been qualified to make us all feel comfortable with what we were voting for. The Hon. Bernie Finnigan made the point that if the Liberal Party was genuine about wanting a true inquiry into this it would have been more qualitative as well, or more descriptive in its terms of reference, so it seems as though everybody is playing games with this.

I will not be supporting this amendment, given that I did approach the Hon. Mr Finnigan to amend the amendment and he shook his head but then did not do it. That tells me that this is a stunt in itself. I will be supporting the motion as it stands.