

LABOR PARTY'S DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

1. Mrs PARKER to the Premier:

The State Secretary of the Labor Party has asked that political parties sign a declaration of principle to commit to an open and tolerant society. Is the Premier aware of this document?

Mr COURT replied:

Mr Speaker -

Mr Trenorden: It was written by Kevin Reynolds!

Mr COURT: It is worse than that! I could not believe this! The Labor Party has sent to the Liberal Party a document about a declaration of principle. That document is self-explanatory. The letter from the Labor Party asks the Liberal Party, along with others, to sign this declaration of principle, and it is signed by John Halden, the State Secretary of the Australian Labor Party. John Halden, who, as we all know, is the man who is now coordinating the election campaign for the Labor Party and the man who a royal commission said had a glittering indifference to the truth, is asking us to sign a declaration of principle! One really does need to have a good sense of humour! I want to formally and publicly respond to this letter that has been given to us by the Labor Party.

The Liberal Party wholeheartedly supports multiculturalism and an open and tolerant society. In stark contrast, the ALP dragoons its supporters into abiding by decisions made by a faceless few union apparatchiks. We in the Liberal Party do things differently, with decisions made through democratic process. Members should just ask the member for Pilbara and Tom Helm about fairness and democracy inside the Labor Party.

The Liberal Party will make a decision about preferences based upon a number of issues, including, I should say, whether political parties seek to deny freedom of choice in the workplace through being beholden to union thuggery. We have great difficulty in participating with any political party that has policies which are highly damaging to the future of our State.

Dr Gallop: You are pathetic!

Mr COURT: What a stunt the Labor Party is trying to pull!

Australia's strength of democratic soul flows from its capacity to withstand politically diverse views - unlike the tyranny practised in many countries around the world. The fact is that many new Australians have come here to escape the underlying political bigotry and intolerance inherent in this stunt. Does Labor suggest that political parties should be effectively banned or corralled from participating in the democratic process through a conspiracy motivated by political intolerance? It seems Labor has forgotten the lessons from the referendum of 1951, when Australians voted to preserve freedom of political thought no matter how diverse or repugnant. It was a Liberal Government that tried to change that, and the Liberal Party has learnt from that mistake.

The real question in all of this is whether Labor asserts that One Nation as a political party is in breach of the laws with respect to racial hatred and equal opportunity. If not, then at the end of the day these questions are all for the voters on polling day in the sanctity of the polling booth.

With apologies to Voltaire, I quote the following: "I hate what you say but will defend to the death your right to say it." That is lost on Labor.

The Liberal Party's State Executive passed a resolution at its last meeting stating that decisions on preferences would be made at the usual time, and that the only preference deal to be done would be with the National Party. We note Mr Halden's statement that his party will put One Nation and other like-minded parties last. Well, it cannot put everyone last. Given Labor's track record of bringing this State almost to its knees under 10 years of Labor Government, we see plenty of good reason to put the Labor Party last at the election.

Dr Gallop: You would put One Nation ahead of the great Australian Labor Party! What a disgrace! Look at you!

Mr COURT: The great Australian Labor Party! Come off it! The Labor Party had its 10 years in government.

Dr Gallop interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Dr Gallop interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows the rules of this place, and if he interjects while I am on my feet, he will be called formally to order; and he is, for the first time. While one can understand the

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 16 November 2000]

p3317a-3318a

Mrs Rhonda Parker; Mr Richard Court; Mr Max Trenorden; Dr Geoff Gallop; Speaker

feelings of members who think they must come to the defence of someone who is answering a question and so on, perhaps we can have a little less interjection and the Premier can finish the answer.

Mr COURT: On this question of who goes last, there was an interesting article in the Press a few days ago.

Mr Shave interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call the Minister for Lands to order for the first time.

Mr COURT: The article states -

The Protestant Vanguard Movement campaigned for Catholicism to be declared the "Anti-Christ". The Nationalist Workers Party advocated a White Australia and rejection of Jews. The National White Workers Party wanted to ban all religions which are Eastern in origin. The Commonsense Front campaigned for "cheaper meat by reducing meat exports". The Home Defence Party formed to "expose the alien, treasonable loyalties and activities" of Prime Minister Harold Holt. And what about the Nazi parties and their offshoots in the "racist/anti-Semitic" collection?

We will make decisions on whom we will put last when we know who the parties are and what they stand for. I repeat what I said: For the Labor Party, under the name of John Halden, who is masterminding its campaign, to seek to ask us to sign a declaration of principle is bordering on a joke.