

SPEAKER - ELECTION

The member for Merredin (Mr Cowan), as the member with the longest continuous service, took the Chair and presided over the election of the Speaker.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [11.42 am]: I move -

That the member for Burrup do take the Chair of the Assembly as Speaker.

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Deputy Premier) [11.42 am]: I second the motion.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [11.42 am]: I accept the nomination.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [11.43 am]: Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the member for Burrup elected as Speaker.

[Applause.]

[The member for Burrup was conducted to the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER (Mr Riebeling): I thank all members for the confidence they have shown in me by electing me to this office and I now assume the Chair as Speaker of the House.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [11.44 am]: Mr Speaker, we on this side of the House congratulate you on your election to the important position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. We respect the independence of the office that you hold and are keen to work with you to ensure that this Chamber operates both efficiently and effectively on behalf of the people of Western Australia. We regard the role of the Speaker in our Parliament as twofold. Firstly, the Speaker upholds the powers and privileges of the Parliament to ensure that the proper function and purposes of the institution of the Parliament are presented to the world. Traditionally the Speaker has taken on that role, and when issues arise about parliamentary privilege or the workings of the Parliament, the Speaker is in a special position to speak about those matters on behalf of all members, regardless of which party or electorate they represent. Secondly, the Speaker plays an important role in our system of accountability by chairing the proceedings of this Chamber and also playing a role behind the Chair. It is crucial to the way our Parliament works that the Speaker has the independence to play that role properly. We respect that. We regard your position as Speaker as an important cog in the overall mechanism of accountability in this State.

Mr Speaker, the approach you have taken to the work of this Parliament over the years indicates that you have a real respect for the institution of Parliament. We believe you are in a position to make a significant contribution to the work of this Parliament as its new Speaker. I wish you all the best in your position, and I am confident that we will work together to ensure that our Parliament is effective and operates on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [11.45 am]: Mr Speaker, I congratulate you as the member for Burrup on your election as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I look forward to your exercising your duties in an impartial manner to ensure that all members of this Parliament have a full and fair opportunity to debate legislation and issues that come before this Parliament. I assure you from the Liberal Opposition that you will receive the full cooperation of all members on this side of the House. I wish you well.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [11.46 am]: Mr Speaker, I also congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker. It is important that the reforms that commenced in the last Parliament be continued, and I know that you have given some consideration to those reforms. I and the other members of the National Party will be keen to work with you to improve the accountability and performance of this House. I believe we would all agree - new members aside - that the performance of this House has been improved in question time and by the other new procedures that have been introduced. I will be interested to see how committees are established, resourced and operated in the next few months. I wish you well in the Chair, and look forward to working with a cooperative Chair.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Minister for Labour Relations) [11.47 am]: Mr Speaker, I add my congratulations on your election as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. That follows on from your fine election win in the seat of Burrup, where you took a marginal seat and built up a large majority. That reflects the fact that you addressed the issues of the wide cross-section of your electorate. I am sure that will be reflected in the way in which you seek to work with members on both sides of the House to advance the interests of members and the work of the House. I recognise also that you have been a significant contributor to debate in this Parliament for some years, and as such I am sure you will have no difficulty in recognising tedious repetition, if ever that should occur. I, and I am sure all members, look forward to working with you to advance the business of the House, and in so doing to seek to look after the interests of the people of Western Australia

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Fred Riebeling; Mr Hendy Cowan; Speaker; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Max
Trenorden; Mr John Kobelke

whom we represent. I wish you well in the position which you have taken on, and I am confident you will perform your duties with full credit to yourself and the House.

THE SPEAKER (Mr Riebeling): I thank those members who have spoken on my election as Speaker. It is a position that I hope to perform to everyone's expectations. I understand the seriousness of the role which I have been given by this Parliament. I understand the importance of ensuring that all members of the House are treated equally under the rules that govern the operation of this House. It is my intention to operate in a manner that allows members from both sides of the House to be as efficient and effective as possible. It is also my desire that the processes of the Parliament be as transparent and as accountable as possible. To this end, we need to improve the conditions under which the Press operate, ensure that we embrace new technology such as the Internet, and improve the television coverage of this place so that we gain access to the broadest possible community. I look forward to the challenging role which this House has seen fit to give me and to the cooperation of all members over the next four years.

In closing, I congratulate all the new members of this House for their efforts in gaining election. It is a very worthwhile and rewarding experience to represent the people of Western Australia in the State Parliament, and I am sure all new members will enjoy their time in this House. I also congratulate all members on both sides of the House who have been re-elected or hold new offices.