

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

The Clerk reported that the office of President was vacant.

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [11.36 am]: I move -

That Hon George Cash do take the Chair in the Council as President.

There is much to commend this candidacy. Hon George Cash has served as our President with distinction and he has the experience and knowledge that is required for the position. He has the undoubted confidence of this Chamber and should continue as President.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [11.37 am]: I second the motion.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan) [11.37 am]: I thank the Government for its expression of confidence in me. However, I decline the nomination.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [11.37 am]: I move -

That Hon John Cowdell do take the Chair in the Council as President.

Over the past few years, Hon John Cowdell has served this place as its Chairman of Committees and I believe he will carry out the role of President with honour and distinction.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral) [11.38 am]: I willingly and happily second the motion.

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [11.38 am]: I submit myself to the will of the House.

THE CLERK (Mr Marquet): There being no further nominations, I declare Hon John Cowdell elected as the President of the Legislative Council.

[Applause.]

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [11.39 am]: With somewhat more than the customary level of reluctance, I assume the Chair. In so doing, I pay tribute to my predecessor, Hon George Cash. He has served this House as its President with distinction no less than he did as a former Leader of the Opposition and a Leader of the Government. This position is accompanied by some expectations, although perhaps not quite as many as were enunciated at the turn of the century. The *Australasian Parliamentary Review* states with regard to the first Commonwealth Parliament -

The first and most serious business which the House . . . will be called upon to transact will be that of electing a Speaker, and it would be difficult to exaggerate its importance; for upon the character, capacity and conduct of that high officer will depend the method in which the House will exercise its functions; whether with dignity, courtesy and conscientiousness, or with laxity of manners, irrelevance of speech, waste of time and irregularity of procedure. An ideal Speaker would be a gentleman . . . who should combine great Parliamentary experience with a perfect knowledge of legal forms, precedents, usages and rulings; inflexible firmness with that suavity of address and deportment which Mazarin inculcated in his familiar "iron hand in a velvet glove"; and a keen consciousness of the responsibility attaching to the autocratic authority necessarily vested in him with exquisite tact in its exercise.

Fortunately, the commentator then states -

We are not unreasonable enough to expect that an ideal Speaker will be found in the Second Chamber
. . . .

Members, while perhaps not performing all of those functions - and I leave the role of Mazarin to the Clerk of the Chamber - I do intend to discharge my responsibilities with fairness and impartiality and to do everything in my power to enhance the standing of this Chamber and this Parliament. I thank members for the honour they have bestowed upon me.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [11.42 am]: Mr President, I take this opportunity to welcome you to the Chair, and I look forward to a productive Parliament, and a Parliament in which you can take great pride in the manner in which it is conducted.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral) [11.42 am]: Mr President, on behalf of the Opposition, I extend my congratulations upon your election. It is a very worthy choice of the House. It is not often that we elect a new President. In the past 24 years, and during my time in this place, you have had two predecessors, both of whom

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Hon John Cowdell; Hon Ken Travers; Hon George Cash; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Jim Scott; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon J. Fischer; President

have been quite superb in the way they have conducted the business of the House. I have no doubt that you, Mr President, will continue that fine tradition we have seen in your admirable performance in the Chamber for many years as Chairman of Committees. I have no doubt that you will manage the House in an impartial way, and I wish you every success.

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [11.43 am]: Mr President, from the crossbenches we wish you well in your new position. We note from experience that in your previous position as Chairman of Committees you conducted yourself extremely well and, although we were very happy with the way the previous President ran this House, we very much welcome you to this position.

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural) [11.43 am] Mr President, I wish you well from my party's point of view. I know you will carry out your duties in an excellent manner, and I look forward to working with you in this session of Parliament.

HON J. FISCHER (Mining and Pastoral) [11.43 am]: Mr President, on behalf of our party, I congratulate you on your election to the esteemed position of President of this Chamber and assure you that you will have the full support of our party.

THE PRESIDENT: I thank members for their kind words of approbation.