



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOORROOPILLY

Hansard 25 August 1998

MEMBERS FOR KEDRON, BUNDAMBA, IPSWICH, CHATSWORTH AND MURRUMBA

Mr BEANLAND (Indoorroopilly—LP) (6.26 p.m.): I rise to second the amendment moved by the member for Warwick. I do so because I believe that the course of action set out in the amendment is the only sensible one in relation to this matter, which has now, as the member for Warwick has indicated, been going for something in excess of eight and a half years. Without putting that into days, we should keep in mind that this matter is ongoing as a culmination of eight and a half years of anger in the community.

What we present is, I believe, the only sensible course of action and the only valid option to settle this long running matter. Until this is resolved once and for all, a cloud will hang over the Government in some respect. It is not good enough to say that the matter has been investigated ad infinitum and that nothing untoward has been found so far in relation to the role of the Cabinet. The simple fact is that, until the Premier was forced to table certain Cabinet documents on 30 July, no proper resolution was even remotely possible. Until it was known with some precision what Cabinet knew and when it knew it, there could be no confidence in simple denials of culpability from members of that Cabinet. There could be no way of knowing whether the actions of the Cabinet were appropriate or inappropriate.

Mr Foley: Why don't you send it over to Connolly/Ryan?

Mr BEANLAND: Of course, I am pleased to hear that members of the Government favour sending it across to Messrs Morris and Howard.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: That is what the Minister interjected just then. The member for Capalaba will get his chance to contribute to this debate shortly. If he is not going to say that this matter should be referred to those people then he should not bother interjecting, because that is the sensible course of action. He is being silly now, as he has been all along with the whole debate. This whole matter would not be being dealt with now if the Premier had taken the course of action some time ago of tabling those documents. He was asked to provide those documents to Messrs Howard and Morris. Labor members are just being silly, as they have been all along with this issue. If they have nothing to hide, they should table the whole lot and get the matter out of the way. But they will not do so for some reasons best known to their good selves.

So the matter will continue and Labor will continue to be hassled about the whole issue. They will be bedevilled by it day by day. It will come back to bite the Government from time to time, just as it is causing it disturbance this evening, all because it will not get the matter resolved sensibly.

Let us resolve the matter sensibly. Let us send it back to Messrs Morris and Howard, who investigated these allegations in the first instance. Their investigation was set up by the former Government. They indicated that they needed certain documents to enable them to finalise that particular investigation. Those documents have now been tabled. I understand that there might be some additional documents around as well. Let us get the matter dealt with once and for all.

As the member for Warwick said, there may well be reasonable explanations. No-one is saying that there are not. However, the point is that previously the Government has not assisted in getting this

matter out of the way and off the decks totally. With the actions we have seen so far, unless there is support for the amendment from the Opposition the matter will not be resolved finally.

However, what we do know without a shadow of a doubt is that the Cabinet was aware from its very first consideration of this matter on 12 February 1990 that the materials gathered by Mr Heiner contained material that was potentially defamatory. We know that on the first occasion the Cabinet was told by the then Minister for Family Services in her submission that one of the benefits of destroying the documents would be a reduction in the risk of legal action. We also know that around the Cabinet table at that time there were a number of lawyers who would have had legal knowledge about how to handle these matters. The import of what they were considering was the destruction of documents that could well have been required for legal action. By 19 February and 5 March, when the decision was finally taken, Cabinet was explicitly aware that those documents had not only been required but demanded.

As the member for Warwick accurately suggested, the question comes down to the issue of the conflicting advice of the Crown Solicitor and Messrs Morris and Howard. Is the Government culpable under the Criminal Code for destroying documents that were being demanded for a potential legal action, or is it culpable only if an action had actually commenced? That is one of the serious questions that has to be and can be addressed now that the matters have all come forward. The sensible thing to do is to go forward and to resolve these issues once and for all.

Time expired.
