



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 25 August 1998

MEMBERS FOR KEDRON, BUNDAMBA, IPSWICH, CHATSWORTH AND MURRUMBA

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (6.16 p.m.): In his contribution, the Leader of One Nation made reference to a child who had died of asthma. I am advised that that child died two years after leaving John Oxley. The record shows that that child was not the one who was handcuffed. The Courier-Mail report was wrong. Channel 7 had the decency to admit that it was wrong, yet the member comes into this Chamber and reuses that incorrect information. The parents of that child have gone through the grief of media exposure which was incorrect, they have gone through the grief of the death of a child, and now they go through the grief of an abuse by the media and an abuse by the member of parliamentary privilege. Why should parents go through the grief again because the member wanted to play politics?

The member has to understand that when he comes into this place he has a responsibility. When he comes into this place and uses parliamentary privilege in that way, real damage is done to real people. One Nation said that it was going to lift the standard of Parliament. All it has done is put the debate in this Parliament in the gutter.

This motion is a disgrace. It is an affront to the Parliament. I have to ask: how long is this going to go on? How long is the member going to play politics for his own political advantage? This is nothing more than a political vendetta.

I was not in the Cabinet that made this decision. I have come to this matter with clean hands. I have come to this matter from a position of having no set view. I have gone through every one of the documents and, in good faith, I tabled them in this Parliament. The member has abused that good faith and misrepresented what I have said. No facts substantiate his case. He then put a question on notice saying that I had not put all the material before the House.

Mr FELDMAN: I rise to a point of order. The Premier just said that he has tabled all those documents from the Cabinet minutes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: As I was about to say, a question put on notice states that I had not tabled all the matters. One Nation wanted a list of the attendees of the Cabinet meeting. Of course, the Cabinet members are well known to all of Queensland, except to the Leader of One Nation. The only thing that I did not table was the menu for the ministerial lunch that day. If the member wants me to find that, I will try to find out what they ate that day. Let us be very clear about what is going on here: this is a political vendetta.

My Government has founded the only properly established independent inquiry into child abuse in institutions. My Government is the only Government to have done it. That inquiry will go back and look at what happened at John Oxley. It will get to child abuse. It will be concerned with the children, not with the political games that are being played by the member for Caboolture and others.

We know that there are people manipulating One Nation on this issue. We understand that Kevin Lindeberg, who happens to be in the gallery during this debate, has written One Nation's speeches on this matter. In a democracy he is entitled to do that, but there are also people behind the scenes who never wanted that inquiry and who are manipulating One Nation. It is being manipulated by

the abusers and the people who did not want an inquiry into child abuse in institutions. There is only one party standing in the way of a full inquiry into child abuse and it is One Nation.

Mr FELDMAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that statement offensive. One Nation has done its best to highlight these things and I ask the member to withdraw the statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I am talking about One Nation the party, not the individuals, and I make no apology for it. There will be some legal action, all right. Today the honourable member for Caboolture has gone around the gallery and distributed a letter that he wrote to the Independent member for Nicklin. Not only is this letter defamatory; he has distributed it outside the bounds of the privileges of this House. Every one of the Ministers he has named in this letter will be able to sue him because he has distributed this letter, no doubt—in fact, certainly—without the knowledge of the member for Nicklin. He has distributed this letter widely to the media here and he has done it in a way that will enable everyone named in it to sue him. Enough is enough. This matter has been investigated more than has ever been required and One Nation's motion is unacceptable.

Time expired.
