



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 27 August 1998

FORDE INQUIRY; MR H. HEILPERN

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (6.25 p.m.): Has the Leader of the Opposition been caught out again? Do honourable members know what he just read from? He read from a statement delivered in the New South Wales Upper House. Do honourable members know what the source of that information was? The Leader of the Liberal Party in the Upper House in New South Wales! That is where it came from.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The sources of the information given to the Leader of the Liberal Party in the Upper House were the people concerned.

Mr BEATTIE: He read word for word from the speech of a Liberal Party politician in New South Wales, and I table the record for the information of the House. We have here a political assassination. Your Liberal Party mate in New South Wales——

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will address the member as the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BEATTIE: The Leader of the Opposition simply came in and read from a document of one of his Liberal mates in New South Wales. That is what he did. He tabled no source of information, but here it is. Do honourable members know what this is?

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Listen to him squeal. He has been exposed again for another half-truth. This has all been about half-truths. Let us look at what happened. He came in here and he has made allegation after allegation after allegation. Has one of them been substantiated? The answer is: no—not one. Who was the man who said that Mr Heilpern is highly regarded in the social welfare area? The Leader of the Liberal Party in New South Wales, Peter Collins! Do honourable members want another Liberal view? There is another Liberal view.

What did Mr Beanland, the honourable member for Indooroopilly, say? He came in here and said that there were three reasons for objecting to Mr Heilpern serving on this inquiry. He said that the first reason was that he was a former director-general of a department criticised by the Wood commission. The review of that department covered a period of six years; the person about whom the member opposite was speaking was not the director-general for all of that time. The member for Indooroopilly has come in here and said——

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, he did. Let us be very clear; the Wood report does not mention him by name anywhere.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, it does. He was not required nor was he asked to appear at any time, nor was he named. So the member opposite has come in here and delivered another one of these great half-truths. Mr Heilpern was not named.

Let us look at this. Allegation one: the Wood royal commission criticised Mr Heilpern for failing to appropriately investigate complaints. That is what the member opposite said. The truth is that the Wood commission did not name Mr Heilpern in any of its six volumes published after three years of inquiry—end of story. Mr Heilpern was never called before the inquiry. Mr Heilpern made no submission

and was not required to give evidence. The member opposite well knows how that inquiry worked. If one was the subject of an investigation, one was called and asked to appear before the inquiry. The inquiry was not interested in him because he was not the subject of the inquiry.

The member opposite has not produced one shred of evidence. I say to all members that this is the most disgraceful performance by the Opposition. For two days it has set out to destroy this inquiry. It has no basis for doing so. The Leader of the Opposition came in here this morning and quoted some comments and then would not tender any evidence of them. There is no substance to anything that the Leader of the Opposition has said that would warrant any reconsideration of this matter. The Minister has behaved appropriately. There has been no shred of evidence produced. The only quotes we have had from the Opposition are either from some sensationalist newspaper or from one of its Liberal Party mates. If this is the way the Opposition is going to perform in the Parliament, let me tell those opposite that not only will the member for Surfers Paradise not be the Leader of the Opposition in six months' time—he will be replaced by someone else—but the rest of them will be there for a long time.

Those opposite have no standards and no decency and they are prepared to destroy a person for political purposes. That says it all. I ask those opposite: where is your evidence? It is nowhere! Those opposite are in the gutter, simply seeking to destroy an honest man. That is what those opposite have sought to do and their credibility is in tatters. There is nothing that the Opposition has put before this Parliament that would warrant a review.
