



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Hansard 27 August 1998

FORDE INQUIRY; MR H. HEILPERN

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (6.50 p.m.): I join in this debate tonight to support the Opposition's motion. The Forde inquiry is probably one of the most important inquiries that this State is ever going to witness. We have to do it precisely right from day one. Nobody on this side of the House opposes Mrs Leneen Forde as the chief commissioner or Jane Thomason as a commissioner, but we do oppose the appointment of Hans Heilpern as a commissioner. The conduct of this inquiry must be impeccable for one reason only. We know the torture that some of the kids in institutions have gone through in the past. None of us in this House or anyone else in Queensland condones that type of the behaviour. The people who are carrying out this inquiry under the stewardship of Mrs Leneen Forde—and she certainly wants people of impeccable character to work with her as commissioners—cannot afford to have anyone with a shady past. That is precisely what we are talking about here this evening: somebody with a shady past.

I say to the Premier and the Minister responsible: replace this person with a person with impeccable character who does not have a shady past, so we can once again put the kids in this State in a position where they will not be sexually interfered with or abused by some other means. On the eve of this inquiry, I point out that it is absolutely paramount that the inquiry goes ahead with commissioners who have the full support of the House and the people of Queensland. Although the Minister is sincere, we are sincere about this inquiry, too. I ask her to please replace this commissioner.

Time expired.
