



Speech by

Hon. ANNA BLIGH

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Hansard 4 March 1999

HEINER DOCUMENTS

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and Minister for Disability Services) (6.20 p.m.): I second the amendment moved by the Premier. In speaking to the amendment, I have to disagree with the Premier on one point. The Premier said that when in Government the Opposition failed to do anything. I beg to differ: it did plenty. Opposition members did everything they could to stand in the way of setting up a properly constituted inquiry into child abuse in this State. Their record speaks for itself. First, they are the architects of the flawed Heiner inquiry. In 1989, when there was an opportunity to do something, the now Leader of the Opposition presided over a Cabinet that set up an inquiry that had no protections, despite the fact that they had the legal mechanisms to do so.

In the four years that I have been in the Parliament, this question has been considered on a number of occasions. I take members back to 1 May 1996, when the member for Capalaba moved a motion that called on the Government to establish an independent authority to fully investigate accusations of paedophilia in this State. I turn to the record of the vote and what I do see? Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge—I see the names of the entire coalition voting against the motion of the member for Capalaba to establish an inquiry into paedophilia.

On 21 August 1997, the member for Brisbane Central moved a motion calling on the Government to establish a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act to investigate thoroughly the incidence of paedophilia, having regard to material held by the Queensland Children's Commission, the Queensland police, the CJC and any other body. I turn to the record and what do I see? Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge and every other member of the coalition voted against that motion. Not only did they do nothing in Government but on two distinct occasions when they had an opportunity in this Parliament to vote in favour of an inquiry into child abuse, they chose to vote against it. The Children's Commission legislation was brought into this House in a form that has subsequently proven to be faulty at every turn. The coalition is simply not up to the task of delivering mechanisms to look into these questions.

Tonight members opposite have said that they support the Forde inquiry, but as members will recall, it is not six months since the shadow Minister moved to disallow a regulation that would have allowed the Forde inquiry to access the documents to investigate the John Oxley centre. Who was the architect of the disallowance motion? It was the very shadow Minister who has come in here tonight and called for another inquiry. That beggars belief.

Members should ask themselves whether the accusations being made here this evening are plausible. Is it plausible that, having spent most of their adult lives fighting a corrupt Government, any one of the 18 members of the first Goss Cabinet would have conspired to corrupt the processes of Government to protect a paedophile ring or to protect a child abuser? It is simply not plausible. I do not always agree with the five Ministers who are on trial here tonight. We have had our stoushes from time to time and I am sure that we will have plenty more. However, do I find it vaguely plausible that they would have conspired to corrupt the process of Government? It is not plausible. Its plausibility rating is so low that it does not require one more investigation.

Tonight, the member for Indooroopilly is doing nothing more than the bidding of One Nation. One Nation has dragged this terrible mess up into the public arena for want of any other substantial matter or for want of any serious matters to do with their electorates. The member for Indooroopilly is doing nothing more than trafficking in the filthy conspiracy theories of a moribund and disintegrating organisation. He has become the handmaiden—

Mr Fenlon: Puppet.

Ms BLIGH: Indeed, he has become the puppet of the member for Caboolture and the crooked henchmen——

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn. Mr Comben raised this issue, nobody else.

Ms BLIGH: I withdraw. He has become nothing more than the handmaiden of the member for Caboolture. The member for Caboolture is the one who wants to move these motions——

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn. Mr Comben raised this matter, nobody else.

Ms BLIGH: I withdraw. I suggest that the member for Indooroopilly reads some of the recent transcripts from Commissioner Forde in which she and counsel assisting the inquiry had to caution people who have sought to politicise the inquiry by dragging this matter into it. Those people include a certain Mr Moss who used to work for One Nation leader Mr Feldman. I think those comments should cause some members to exercise a great deal of care when they seek to prosecute this matter and drag it into the Forde inquiry.

Time expired.
