



Speech by

**Hon. ANNA BLIGH**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

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Hansard 17 August 1999

**CENSURE OF MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (6.40 p.m.) I rise to support the amendment before the House and, frankly, to condemn the motion that the Opposition has moved.

**Mr Cooper:** Good thing you made it.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member. I am glad that he is pleased to see me.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Ms BLIGH:** Nothing could interest me more. I support the views expressed by the member for Yeronga. Tonight, this House has been called upon by the Opposition to pass judgment on the member for Ipswich, the Treasurer of the State, before the Auditor-General has had any opportunity to make a judgment upon the facts, before any CJC officer has had an opportunity to make any sort of investigation, before Mr Gotterson has had an opportunity to review the documentation, and before any report has been made by those people charged with the authority to fully investigate all of these matters.

If this Parliament is to make itself the judge of these matters, then who are we to put matters before officers such as the Auditor-General? Why do we have a CJC? It is well known that the coalition has never supported the Criminal Justice Commission. They used their two and a half years in office to do everything that they could to bring down the Criminal Justice Commission. They slashed its budget and, in Government, they used their authority to put in place an inquiry that was designed to do nothing more than nobble the Criminal Justice Commission. When that inquiry fell over, they put in place another inquiry. That inquiry did not just fall over; it was condemned by the Supreme Court of this State on the grounds of political bias.

Now the Opposition comes before us and says, "Don't listen to what the CJC has said. Put the CJC's activities, deliberations and investigations to one side. This Parliament can be the judge." This Parliament does not have before it all of the relevant documentation. This Parliament does not have the capacity to investigate or interview any of the people concerned. It is so typical of the coalition that they would seek to put to one side the work of the Criminal Justice Commission. They have never supported the work of that commission. They have never seen the need for an independent watchdog. What did they seek to do when the independent watchdog turned its glare on them and their activities? They sought to reduce its powers even before they were in Government, and when they were in Government they squandered taxpayers' money on inquiry after inquiry, which was designed to do little more than nobble the Criminal Justice Commission. It is little wonder that the coalition does not want to hear the outcomes of the deliberations of that inquiry.

I, for one, have confidence that the Criminal Justice Commission can do the job that it has been charged with and I look forward to the outcome of that inquiry. I look forward to the recommendations and findings of their deliberations and to those of the Auditor-General. When we have those reports before us, that is the time that this Parliament should make a judgment about this matter; not now. It is so typical that the coalition would be seeking to make cheap political mileage out of a matter that has now been before the public for some three weeks.

I also support the statements of the Premier this morning, who drew the attention of the House to the fact that after three weeks of this matter being brought to the public's attention, the coalition

never had the wit or the will to bring any of these matters to the public's attention themselves but day in and day out simply sought to plagiarise the Courier-Mail, and sought to do so this morning. It is little wonder that they would have nothing more to offer us this evening.

What do we see in the motion that they have put before us? They have not only sought to ask this House to do something that is already in the hands of the authorised officers—

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Ms BLIGH:** I am actually referring to the Opposition's motion. Is the member suggesting that I should not read from it? The Opposition is also asking that the member who has done the right thing and stood aside not receive ministerial entitlements or salary. This member has done the right thing. This member stood aside while an inquiry made a judgment about his activities. When similar circumstances were put before the members opposite, not one of them had the courage or the political will to do the same. I note that the member for Indooroopilly is shaking his head. Well he may.

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