



Speech by

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HEINER DOCUMENTS

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (6.47 p.m.): How much digging do we have to do to get to the bottom of this Shreddergate matter? It started with mere conjecture and scuttlebutt in the same way that the Fitzgerald inquiry into the Police Service started with scuttlebutt and a police officer being trapped by his own words. That is just how Mr Comben was trapped by his own words.

In this case—Shreddergate—we had to dig into the bowels of the Public Service and the twilight zones of Children's Services. Just like the Four Corners program, the Channel 9 Sunday program highlighted what was said and what was done in this despicable Shreddergate affair. This was highlighted by Goss Minister Pat Comben's statement—and I will repeat what he said on the Sunday program—

"In broad terms we were all made aware there was material about child abuse. That there was material which was said to be highly defamatory and it was accepted on face value that if this matter was of such concern to have got to a level of a cabinet decision then those allegations must have had considerable merit and substance."

There is a stench in this House and it comes from the members opposite, and in particular from the Government benches, where five of the Shreddergate people now sit. What it means is this: the Beattie Labor Government is a discredited Government, a deceitful Government and a Government without credibility.

Let me turn to the honourable members in the Opposition. Where were they on 25 August 1998 when an attempt was made to expel these five from the Chamber? I will tell honourable members where they were: they were cuddling up with them over there—the very members they seek to condemn and rubbish now. Hypocrites! Only 11 people knew what was going on in this Parliament, and they were the 11 One Nation members who sought justice for the abused children of this State. The abuse was covered up for nine years before the Government had the gumption to go and do something about it.

Now I turn to the member for Nicklin, to whom I sent a personal letter asking for his commitment to honour his pledge to Queensland—a pledge that he would support this Government only if there was no evidence of illegal activities, fraud or misappropriation. As a solicitor himself, does he see no wrong in the shredding of official documents required for a court case—documents that contain details of child abuse? On the night of the debate on the motion of confidence I asked the member for Nicklin, "Do you want to be a reformer of government or just a seat warmer?" I again ask that question of him tonight: is he a reformer or a seat warmer?

Let us now turn to the Forde inquiry, where evidence has been gathered that abuse of children did take place in the John Oxley Youth Detention Centre. Evidence has been gathered at that inquiry showing that child-care officers reported this abuse up the chain of command. This evidence was available and was contained in the Heiner inquiry documents, which were the subject of a right of access by a legally enforceable statute. But where are those documents now? They have been shredded—shredded by a rogue archivist who cannot be brought before an inquiry to answer the questions pertaining to that shredding. A director-general who acted with similar complicity in the shredding of those documents also refuses to be interviewed in relation to her knowledge of the shredding. A former Minister of the Crown now adopts the Sergeant Schulz philosophy: "I know

nothing, I see nothing and I hear nothing." In the volumes that have been written implicating these people in this unlawful action, what has been the extent of the CJC's input? Two pages explaining that it can do nothing! This is from the supreme investigative body of this Government. If this does not ensure its demise, what else can?

The only way to clean up this sorry Government debacle is to set up an independent commission of inquiry, separate from the Forde commission of inquiry, to investigate the destruction of these documents and the subsequent allegations of former Labor Cabinet Minister Pat Comben on Sunday 21 February 1999 that Goss Labor Ministers were aware that the documents contained evidence of child abuse. For nine years this State has cried out for this sorry mess to be cleaned up. It has covered up the abuse of children for nine years. It should come clean on the record tonight. It should support the motion. Yes, support the motion and sleep better tonight.

Time expired.
