



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 24 November 1999

PERSONS CONVICTED OF OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (6.15 p.m.)—In rising to support this motion, I am pleased to see that it does have the support of the Labor Party, the Government in this place. It is a most important motion we are proposing. I am sure that both sides of the House—all members of this Parliament, in fact—are of one view when it comes to child predators, and that is what we are talking about in relation to this motion. I must agree with the previous speakers that this is one of the most important areas we can possibly give some attention to.

It is quite clear that, to arrive with legislation that is going to be relatively free of hiccups, we will certainly need the full resources of the Crown Law office, the policy office of the Justice Department, where particular expertise in this area resides, the Parliamentary Counsel's Office and others, because it is a tricky and difficult area in which to legislate. Sure, the United Kingdom is going down this road. I am sure that officers in those departments in the employ of the Public Service, the Government of this State, do have the expertise to produce legislation along these lines. We have seen it before, and I am sure we are going to see it in this regard. Therefore, I am very pleased to see that this motion has the bipartisan support of this Parliament.

Legislation is not going to be achieved in five minutes—I accept that—but it is good to see that we are linking it with the Children's Commission and that there is going to be additional work done in that area as we move down this road. It is fair to say that, at the end of the day, it is the principle that is particularly important. Of course, we are talking about not only paid employment but also unpaid employment as well—that is, voluntary organisations. When it comes to these organisations and the employment of this type of person, I believe there does have to be some onus on that individual applying for work in the first place.

Simply putting in a five-year maximum penalty is not necessarily going to stop them from applying for a position, because we know what child predators are like. But, nevertheless, it will certainly make them think twice in many cases before they make application or seek by some devious method to get an opportunity to obtain a job in an area that works with children. I think it is important to throw that onus back on those people who have been convicted of this type of offence in the past.

Some will say that they have served their time. Unfortunately, when it comes to paedophilia, child molesters and the whole area of predators, history has shown that, for those who have been convicted of these types of offences who go through treatment, treatment in many cases simply does not work. We are therefore faced with repeat offenders. That is particularly important in the case of sexual offences. Also, none of us wants people who have been physically violent towards children dealing with children. The motion before the Parliament this evening deals with a most important issue, and it is one which will require the effort of both sides of the House to produce the desired result.

I know that we all agree that children deserve to be treated in the best way possible by the Parliament of the day. We need to make every effort to ensure that the full resources of Government and the full resources of this Parliament are directed to that end. It is significant that the Queensland Crime Commissioner is supportive of a move in this direction. I note comments from him, particularly in relation to following the example of the United Kingdom Labour Government. I think that is relevant.

After all, we must remember that the Queensland Crime Commission was set up because of the frustration that members of this Parliament and the former Government felt in relation to the work of the CJC in this area. It simply was not good enough. The areas of paedophilia, organised crime and drugs were not getting the desired attention. I am sure that both sides of Parliament felt that these three significant areas were not getting from the CJC the amount of detailed attention that they required. That is why the Queensland Crime Commission was set up and that is why it has been given such extensive powers to deal with this matter and to make recommendations in this area.

Time expired.
