



Speech by

PAUL LUCAS, MLA

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard 4 March 1999

PARLIAMENTARY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Report

Mr LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (10.11 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee titled A report in relation to statements allegedly made by a member of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, Mr Jack Paff MLA.

Members would be aware that the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee has been conducting an examination of statements allegedly made by Mr Paff, MLA, at an official function on 28 September 1998, including an investigation conducted by the CJC into the matter. I now table the report of the committee which was adopted on 26 February 1999 by a bipartisan majority of the committee by five votes to one.

Yesterday I indicated to the House that the member who opposed the report was considering whether to provide a dissenting report or statement and that pursuant to standing order 119(e) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the Legislative Assembly such a dissenting report or statement, if made, must be provided to the committee within seven days of the committee adopting its report. I informed the House that I anticipated that in those circumstances the committee intended to table its report early next week.

Of course, members would be aware that yesterday Mr Paff, MLA, resigned and was subsequently discharged from the committee. Yesterday afternoon the committee took legal advice from the Clerk of the Parliament concerning its position in relation to its report and the Standing Orders. Following receipt of that advice, the committee resolved to print its report overnight and to table that report this morning.

There are a lot of things that I could say in relation to the findings of the committee as detailed in the report. However, to attempt to do so in the short time available to me this morning would not do justice to the very serious findings which the committee has made.

The report records that a bipartisan majority of the committee, by five votes to one, found that the member for Ipswich West, Mr Paff, MLA, made serious allegations of criminal conduct against serving and retired police officers. The committee found that the allegations were untrue or, to use Mr Paff's own words, were "a total lie". The committee found that by making the remarks he did, Mr Paff seriously defamed the character of those current and former police officers who were the subject of Mr Paff's allegations. The committee found that Mr Paff's conduct was completely unacceptable and inappropriate. The committee found that Mr Paff, by his actions, jeopardised public confidence in the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in the statutory role it performs in monitoring and reviewing the CJC.

The report records that Mr Paff gave differing and inconsistent explanations for his conduct. The committee found that, even if his explanations could be accepted as true, his conduct was inappropriate. In short, the report records that a bipartisan majority of the committee, by five votes to one, condemned Mr Paff's conduct. The report speaks for itself. I commend the report to the House.