



Speech by

# Mr. R. CONNOR

MEMBER FOR NERANG

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Hansard 25 March 1999

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION; COMMENTS BY MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang—LP) (7.11 p.m.): This morning in Parliament the Minister for Main Roads made certain comments. These involved matters relating to allegations of possible official misconduct by a Main Roads departmental officer and the referral of that matter to the CJC. I now place on record the fact that at this stage I have not and would not have referred this matter to the CJC; the department did.

I wish also to put on record the underhanded way in which the Minister has misrepresented this information. Firstly, the Minister did not acknowledge the fact that neither the department nor the CJC during its investigation contacted me for further information or evidence. Secondly, the Minister did not fully disclose relevant matters in the response from the CJC. The following paragraph was also contained within the CJC's letter—

"In the circumstances, the Commission does not intend to take the matter further unless informed of some relevant development."

Obviously, the CJC has not finally closed this case. The Minister almost achieves a misleading of the Parliament in that deceptive move.

I now wish to move on to the manner in which the CJC has conducted itself in this matter. Firstly, it was no surprise to me to see the signature at the bottom of the CJC letter—none other than that of Mr M. A. Barnes, the Labor lawyer who misled the Senate in relation to his ALP activities. Secondly, it was no surprise to see the speed with which the Labor lawyer was prepared to jump to a Labor Minister's tune. Mr Barnes had not received the relevant information in relation to the department's investigation until 11 February 1999, yet just 18 days later, on 1 March, Mr Barnes was able to grant a qualified clearance to Mr Worrall, the public official involved.

Mr Barnes' haste in this matter should be compared with other Labor inspired inquiries with which he was involved in the past—for example, the foxtail palms inquiry, which was held in camera and found that Labor minders had no case to answer; and the speed with which the CJC was able to finalise the inquiry into the alleged bribe of the then member for Mundingburra, Ken Davies, prior to an election. I refer also to numerous other political inquiries that Mr Barnes has been involved with. I send one message to the Minister in relation to this matter: watch this space for further relevant developments.

Time expired.

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