



Speech by

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Hansard 1 March 2000

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—CCAQ) (10.59 p.m.): Yesterday we saw where the Beattie Government's supposed openness and transparency has failed—it withheld information resulting in a duly elected member of this Parliament being suspended from Parliament for 21 days. So not only does the Labor Government in this State shred evidence, the heads of committees decide what information should or should not come to this House and at what speed that information should arrive within the precincts of this House. Perhaps Queensland should be run by a committee, not by the elected representatives of this Parliament.

Here we have an honest, open and fearless report given by the Parliamentary Commissioner into an inquiry of leaking information from the CJC that was withheld for a time and, I suspect, for a purpose. Hypocrisy and the very height of it is evidenced in the Criminal Justice Commission. We see them at this very moment posturing in the media and the press in order to try to raise their presence and standing in the community by demanding answers from the police and attempting to justify their very own existence as they probe and inquire into police misuse of computer database information and crying foul to all and sundry about how bad it is.

But let us go back a few months when the CJC themselves were subjected to very similar scrutiny by the Parliamentary Commissioner, Ms Julie Dick, where they leaked information not to a single person but to the Courier-Mail in that details of interviews and statements still to be verified were leaked. Even in today's Courier-Mail we see evidence of previous breaches and a photo of Mr Barnes. What was the answer to the Parliamentary Commissioner about the leaked information? The answer was that it could have come from scuttlebutt in the hallways. Are these the sort of loose lipped investigators who are now being employed by the Criminal Justice Commission? Is this the sort of integrity we expect from officers in the CJC—to take sensitive information and discuss it loudly over coffee and doughnuts in the cafeteria or over the water cooler?

The people of Queensland think not. Perhaps that is the sort of answer the police officers should have given the CJC investigators in the current inquiry. Because the CJC was discredited and embarrassed because their own inadequacies were found out, the CJC is now seeking redress for their embarrassment. What is the price they are asking from the Beattie Labor Government? Julie Dick's job. The position of Parliamentary Commissioner must go. Why? So nobody is looking over the shoulder of the Criminal Justice Commission and the PCJC. The CJC does not want to answer to anyone. The CJC wants to remain the ultimate power and authority in this State. What have we seen as a result of a decade of the CJC? Something like over \$500m spent, a failed Trident inquiry and no arrests of major drug traffickers. All we have to show for it is a couple of minor charges for misdeeds of a few low ranking police officers.

In reality, all we have is a couple of parking tickets and nothing else for our money. If proper scrutiny was given, it is the CJC and not the Parliamentary Commissioner who should go. She found that there is a foul smell in Coronation Drive, and that is the CJC. If one was cynical, one would say that the CJC has just taken over the reins of what the Labor Party used to describe as Joh Bjelke-Petersen's Special Branch. The only difference we have now is a rampant CJC with the Labor Party in charge.

Yesterday morning in this very Parliament the Premier, by his very cunning use of diatribe, failed to answer the question raised by the member for Ipswich West. But we can read between the lines that

the job of the Parliamentary Commissioner is on the line. Who is the Premier really working for? The people of Queensland? I think not. The Courier-Mail? Maybe. It was their suggestion in their editorial on Saturday, 26 February. Or do the friendships of old when the Premier himself was Chairman of the PCJC remain? Do the ties with the old Labor Lawyers run so deep that he must protect them and their well-paid jobs at all costs? The question yesterday morning from the member for Ipswich West may well have been the scalpel that lanced the festering boil of discontent in the CJC and that which Labor is showing for the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner.

Having seen first-hand the impartiality of the Parliamentary Commissioner, I am here to tell to the Premier and Queensland that I will certainly be thwarting any attempt to destroy the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner as an independent arm of Government. The office of the Parliamentary Commissioner is sacrosanct and there should be no attempt to take it away when the commissioner is doing such an ardent job for Queensland and Queenslanders in ensuring that the CJC does not continue as the rampant body that it is.
