



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 30 May 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing; Dr B. Head; Mr I. McGaw

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: On Friday the CJC brought down two findings. The CJC found that there was no reasonable suspicion of any improper influence or interference involved in the decision of Craig Brown to withdraw a complaint against the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. For the information of the House, I table a copy of the CJC statement. A second CJC finding related to public servant Merv Lawrence. The CJC reported that Mr Lawrence strongly reiterated that at no stage was he threatened by any person in relation to his actions. For the information of the House, I table a copy of the CJC's media release.

I have also received confidential reports from the Criminal Justice Commission in relation to allegations made against Dr Brian Head, the Public Service Commissioner, and Mr Ian McGaw of the Office of the Public Service Commissioner. The terms of the reports provide that, if certain evidentiary matters are satisfied, disciplinary action may be taken against Dr Head and Mr Ian McGaw. Dr Head has voluntarily stood aside pending the finalisation of this matter. I am responsible for considering disciplinary matters in relation to Dr Head. As part of this responsibility, I am obliged to provide Dr Head natural justice in this matter. In honouring this obligation, I have provided Dr Head a reasonable time within which to respond to the allegations made against him. After the expiry of that time, I will carefully consider the report and Dr Head's response prior to making a determination on the appropriate disciplinary action. Dr Glynn Davis, as acting Public Service Commissioner, is responsible for considering disciplinary matters relating to Mr McGaw. Natural justice is also being afforded to Mr McGaw.

This is a very serious matter and I will consider the relevant issues carefully before I make any determination. However, I will be endeavouring to finalise this matter as quickly as possible. The acting Public Service Commissioner has advised me that he met with Mr Merv Lawrence of the Office of the Public Service Commissioner following media reports about Mr Lawrence's contract. Mr Lawrence sought the meeting as he was concerned about the implications that his departure from the Office of the Public Service Commissioner may be perceived to be against his wishes or connected in some way with the recent Criminal Justice Commission investigations.

I am advised by the acting Public Service Commissioner that, in his meeting with Mr Lawrence, Mr Lawrence indicated that discussions with Dr Brian Head, the Public Service Commissioner, had commenced some months ago about an exit from the office at a mutually agreed timing. Mr Lawrence has affirmed to the acting Public Service Commissioner his desire for this process to continue.

The CJC has now provided independent confirmation that Mr Lawrence is leaving the Queensland Public Service of his own accord and without pressure. The matters relating to Dr Head and Mr McGaw are serious matters and they are being handled in accordance with the law and natural justice. I table both of those reports.
