



Speech by

JOHN ENGLISH

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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CRIME AND MISCONDUCT BILL

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (5.30 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate with a unique perspective on this bill. I joined the police department in 1989 and lived through the Fitzgerald commission from the inside. It should be highlighted that only a very small percentage of the police who were working in the Queensland Police Service at that time were identified as corrupt or as having any involvement in corrupt practices. Despite this small percentage of corrupt police, the public confidence in the Queensland Police Service was very, very quickly and correctly eroded. The Queensland Police Service has worked extremely hard over the past 10 years to rebuild public confidence. The CJC, which was created as a result of the Fitzgerald inquiry, was an important tool in rebuilding public confidence.

It has taken many, many years of hard work by the Criminal Justice Commission and members within the Queensland Police Service to get the Queensland Police Service to its current status of a highly respected organisation, both nationally and internationally. The increasing credibility of the Queensland Police Service can be seen in the creation of the Ethical Standards Command and the fact that a lot of accusations of misconduct are being handed back to the police. The Queensland Police Service has proven itself trustworthy to the Criminal Justice Commission, proven itself to have the ability to objectively and independently investigate allegations of misconduct.

The member for Glass House mentioned the streamlining of the complaints process. Having worked in the Ethical Standards Command for some time, I can attest to delays being caused by complaints having to go to the Criminal Justice Commission for assessment. Delays occurred there, in some cases, of one or two days and sometimes longer before the complaint was handed back to the Ethical Standards Command or a region for ongoing investigation. This process of combining the Queensland Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission should help streamline some of those matters. The Queensland Crime Commission was born for a number of reasons. Some people allege that it was an attempt to undermine the Criminal Justice Commission.

Ms Male: It was.

Mr ENGLISH: I will take that interjection. It also did have the ability to focus a high police presence on organised crime—something that may have been neglected up to that point.

The member for Gladstone made the point that this combining of the Queensland Crime Commission and the CJC will dilute the effort towards proactively investigating paedophile activity in Queensland. I cannot see how she comes to that conclusion. Whether paedophilia is or is not a standing reference, I see the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Crime Commission as being highly motivated to track down and proactively pursue paedophiles. I would like to draw the attention of the member for Gladstone to Task Force Argos within the Queensland Police Service that has a standing reference. Its entire existence is to locate, identify and charge paedophiles. I was a member of their Internet team for some time. We used a computer and the Internet proactively to locate, track and identify paedophiles using the Internet to procure children and to swap images of children and relate stories in relation to paedophilia. The Queensland Police Service has its own system internally for proactively targeting paedophiles and going after these disgusting creatures.

Another speaker earlier in the debate failed to find any positives in combining the Queensland Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission. Obviously, owing to his limited mental capacity, he is not able to cope with the concept of the pooling of resources. It is something that is quite common in the private sector and the public sector. Why set up two administrative areas when we

can cut down the cost involved in administering an investigative arm and spend more money on carrying out investigations? I hope the member is currently listening and I hope that, despite his limited brain capacity, he can grasp that concept and understand that, in combining the Criminal Justice Commission and Queensland Crime Commission, we need only run one administrative section. The resources given to those two organisations can be pooled and targeted where they should be: on carrying out and conducting investigations, not on shuffling pieces of paper.

For many years now many law enforcement agencies have conducted multi-jurisdictional task forces where investigations involve multiple agencies such as the Australian Federal Police, the Queensland Police Service, the Criminal Justice Commission, the National Crime Authority and the Queensland Crime Commission. This combining of the Queensland Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission is just part of formalising that process. Rather than having five agencies involved in one investigation, it cuts the number down to four. The reason that they use multi-jurisdictional task forces is that a lot of agencies have particular skills, particular resources or particular powers. This will combine the powers and the resources of those two agencies to fight crime more effectively.

Unfortunately, the member for Toowoomba South has a quite Neanderthal silo mentality and wants to keep the CJC separate from the Queensland Crime Commission for no very good reason other than that he cannot cope with the thought of a multi-jurisdictional task force. It should be highlighted that, given what is happening in the New South Wales Police Service at the moment, by combining the Criminal Justice Commission and the Queensland Crime Commission—that is, the corruption-fighting body and the organised crime fighting body—there is the potential to exchange information very, very freely in relation to any potential link between organised crime and corrupt police activities. I think we have seen examples of that in the New South Wales Police Service.

If an organised crime investigation is ongoing currently with the Queensland Crime Commission and it identifies some link to corrupt activities in the Queensland Police Service, the process of relaying that information between the Queensland Crime Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission could become a bureaucratic nightmare. I say that from experience. By combining the two agencies we will have a free and full exchange of information which will ensure that the Queensland Police Service maintains its lead as one of the most honest police services within Australia and one which has the highest standards of integrity.

Having worked in the intelligence areas for many years, I think it is important to differentiate between tactical and strategic intelligence. The opposition has made a number of points about politicising the research area. Having conducted both tactical intelligence probes and strategic intelligence probes, again I can attest to the fact that strategic intelligence probes quite often do have policy implications. When we are looking at the big picture issues, of course we need to look at big picture solutions. I think it is quite fair and right that the strategic intelligence assessments that are conducted should be passed on to government for those big picture solutions. Of course, the day-to-day tactical intelligence operations will not be compromised by the relocation of the research arm into the Premier's Department.

The member for Southern Downs also ranted on about the complaint he had about non-conviction of paedophiles. Again, it just harks back to the National Party's limited intelligence and their inability to understand the separation of powers. No matter what the law enforcement body, their job is to investigate allegations. If sufficient evidence exists, then they prefer charges. It is up to the independent judicial process to then convict. So for him to come in here and confuse a debate about law enforcement with the separate, independent judicial process again shows his inability to pull his head out of the 1980s and come to grips with the separation of powers. The fact that a court may not convict a paedophile is not a matter for parliament; rather, it is a matter for the integrity of the judiciary. I find it difficult that after all these years those opposite have not come to grips with that concept. In summary, this bill will result in a more effective law enforcement agency. I commend the bill to the House.
