



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 25 November 2009

MOTION: CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMISSION INQUIRY; GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.53 pm): I think the Labor members protest too much! Our motion is actually supporting the CMC to have the resources to get on with the job and investigate Labor corruption. Yet we hear members opposite trying to verbal us—trying to verbal the written word in fact—and claim that we are attacking the CMC when in fact we are upholding the rights of the CMC to have the resources to do the job—to look into the corruption which is clearly becoming systemic in this government. The government claims to be as pure as the driven snow but, like a glacier, the closer you get and the more you examine it it is awfully dirty, and this is what we are seeing in Queensland.

I dispute the facts of the Labor members who have claimed that the CMC does not need more resources and has not asked for them. In fact, the annual report of the CMC says—

The CMC will have to seek further funding for these areas to continue to cope with this increasing demand.

If that is not a case of an organisation that is under pressure which has difficulty in undertaking its core responsibilities, then I do not know what is. This is a government that says, 'There's no problem, but just don't look too closely!'

After 20 years in government Labor is like a rotting barrel of apples with a Premier swimming in the soup, pretending nothing is wrong. You would think that if rotten apples kept on bobbing up to the surface in the Labor government administration something was wrong; it was not just a one-off event. Well, no! According to the Premier, the system is working yet still she is swimming through the soup of all of these rotten apples as they keep bobbing to the surface. She says, 'No, nothing's wrong in Queensland. The system is working.' But tonight we have Labor members who are in fact denying the opportunity for a motion that would in fact seek to empower the CMC with the appropriate resources to crack down and to fully investigate issues of systemic corruption.

We have just heard the tip of the iceberg with regard to matters that are currently before the CMC. We have just heard the tip of the iceberg into matters which clearly indicate that there is more than just a one-off rotten apple bobbing to the surface. There is a pattern that has been emerging with this Labor government in recent years, but how can anyone trust that the Premier has a desire to clean up the mess that is there when in fact she employed an electoral rorter as her chief of staff? This is not modelling the highest levels of ethical care for the rest of the public sector and for senior political staff where there is now this question that they are abusing their power with regard to what they are trying to extort out of the professional public sector. We want a public sector that is not compromised by an abuse of power, and this is a form of corruption—an abuse of power seeking to subvert the rules with regard to how funding is allocated.

We have already heard from the CMC hearing that there have been claims made that ministerial staffer Tutt asked for a grant to be allocated and he said, 'Just do it' to a public servant. There was no regard to the guidelines as to how that money was to be spent. We see evidence before the commission hearing that this is something that goes beyond just one staffer, yet once again we have a government that

is in denial. But there is a pattern with this government beyond just Mike Kaiser. The Premier went to the election and promised that she was not going to sell the assets of Queensland. She said that there would be no petrol tax in Queensland. In fact, she is a Premier who has made many promises and seen them broken. She is not standing on very solid ground for people to believe her now that there is not more corruption in this government.

It is time to get to the heart of this matter. It is not time for a denial by this government and this state that there is not something far worse than just a few people who keep coming before this commission of inquiry. This afternoon a bill has been voted down by Labor members with regard to establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate these matters, and tonight we have another disgraceful example of Labor members wanting to deny the opportunity for the CMC to have the funding to ensure that appropriate investigations are undertaken into this government.

Something is rotten in the state of Queensland, and for the government and Premier Bligh to continue to deny it is truly a disgrace and for members opposite to indicate that they will not vote for this motion is tainting them with the very problem we saw when this Labor government corrupted the process that let Gordon Nuttall off the hook and changed the Criminal Code to absolve him of matters which were potentially criminal in nature. Shame on those new Labor members who have come into this place! They have an opportunity to exonerate themselves from the sins of those they joined on the opposite benches, but from the interjections we have heard tonight they are just as bad as those on the Labor side who have served here for 20 years!

(Time expired)