



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Member for Moreton

SPEECH

Thursday, 13 September 2007

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	Hayes, Chris, MP	Question No.	

Mr HAYES (Werriwa) (9.49 am)—There has been a great deal of reporting this morning of the Prime Minister's decision to cut and run from the prime ministership if he retains his seat and his government, come the next election. But there has not been much coverage of the Prime Minister's failure to defend the integrity of the AFP having regard to the scurrilous use of parliamentary privilege by the member for Moreton earlier this week.

On Tuesday, the member for Moreton, in what I am confident will be one of his last contributions in this place, launched a series of attacks on the AFP, claiming that he was a victim of a high-level conspiracy and questioning the motives and independence of the AFP. The member for Moreton said:

... political strings are permeating even through the highest levels of law enforcement such as the Australian Federal Police ...

Yesterday in question time, when asked about these attacks, the Prime Minister, obviously more concerned about the numbers in the Liberal party room than about the integrity of the AFP, did not utter one word of support for those police officers under attack. Rather than defending the good name and integrity of the AFP, the Prime Minister decided to defend the member for Moreton.

The Prime Minister should not tolerate such attacks under parliamentary privilege. Police are in a unique position. They are subject to an oath of office. The oath grants police enormous powers and places particularly great responsibilities on these officers. It is a great personal responsibility that is at the heart of their profession, and it is a personal responsibility coupled with a deep personal commitment that distinguishes police officers from other members of the community in many respects. A failure to defend their integrity—integrity that is at the very core of the profession of a sworn police officer—is nothing short of a personal attack on every serving police officer, be they state or federal.

As anyone who has had any involvement with or any knowledge of the AFP would know, there are proper channels through which allegations such as those raised by the member for Moreton could be followed up and investigated. After all, the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity has recently begun operating under this government. That process is available to the member for Moreton, but he did not seek to avail himself of it. He sought to make a personal and scurrilous attack on the good name of police officers, using parliamentary privilege. Police officers and their families deserve better than a Prime Minister and a government that fail to defend their integrity. (*Time expired*)