

14 November 2007

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Dear Val Sim,

In October, I emailed you at the Law Commission with some questions pertaining to the Peter Ellis case. You have not responded. Did you receive my email? Below is a copy of that email including some additional questions. If you would rather not respond, please advise me and I will not contact you again.

I am an independent researcher who is researching the Peter Ellis/Christchurch Civic Creche case. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in helping me with my research.

In 2000, the Government set up a ministerial inquiry into the case. Dr Louise Sas, a Canadian psychologist, was one of the experts appointed to the inquiry. I have asked the Justice Minister whether any of the parties to the inquiry nominated Dr Sas. He has advised me that official records do not show where Dr Sas's name originated. Do you have any idea as to how Dr Sas came to be nominated to the inquiry?

In April 1999, when the Justice Ministry turned down Peter Ellis' second application for a pardon, you indicated that you would have obtained Professor Stephen Ceci's formal opinion on the children's evidence if the Court of Appeal had not been seized of the case. In June 2000, you advised Sir Thomas that he should not select Professor Ceci as one of his expert advisors. Why did you think Professor Ceci was unworthy of selection when, little over a year earlier, you appeared to believe that his opinion could be helpful?

In a letter to this writer dated 24 December 2003, you wrote that "Sir Thomas [Eichelbaum] was required to seek opinions from two experts". He was of course required to seek opinions from *at least* two experts. Did you suggest to Sir Thomas that he should appoint more than two? If so, how many experts did you advise should be selected?

When, in March 2000, you recommended to the Justice Minister that Sir Thomas Eichelbaum head the ministerial inquiry, were you aware that Sir Thomas had had a long friendship with Neil Williamson, the presiding judge at Ellis' trial? Were you also aware that Sir Thomas had said of Justice Williamson: "I had the greatest admiration for Neil...[h]e conducted many of the most difficult trials of his time, and he did so impeccably"?

During the ministerial inquiry, you expressed concern for the “personal reputations” of the evidential interviewers, the complainants and their families, but not the creche workers or their families. Is it fair to say that at the time of the ministerial inquiry you believed that Peter Ellis’ convictions were safe?

Thank you in advance for your time. Please feel free to ask me any questions about this letter or my research.

Yours sincerely

Ross Francis