

Witness Statement of: Rt Hon Lord Jopling

Statement No: 2

Date Statement made: 12 March 2019

IN THE MATTER OF: INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

1. I make this statement further to my first statement dated 9 June 2018. When I drafted my first statement I did so from memory and without having looked at the documents within the Whips Notes for a number of years.
2. Over the weekend of 9-10 March 2019 I read the Opening Statement by Counsel to the Inquiry, which has jogged my memory in respect of two separate issues.
3. Firstly, approximately 50 years ago during a private conversation with John Cobb QC, later Sir John Cobb, he told me in an informal capacity that he had been asked by police or the DPP to look at papers regarding child abuse allegations against Cyril Smith MP. He told me that after going through all the papers, he had advised the police or the DPP that he did not think there was evidence sufficiently strong to get a conviction. I did not see any of the papers he was referring to.
4. A few years ago, I heard that Lord Steel of Aikwood was being criticised over a potential cover-up of evidence against Cyril Smith. I told Lord Steel informally about my previous conversation with John Cobb. I believe that he subsequently referred publicly to my conversation with him, without naming me. I can't recall now how I heard or read that he had referred publicly to our conversation.
5. Secondly, I now recall that sometime around the early 1980s whilst I was still Chief Whip, I heard that Peter Morrison was being hounded by the media over a supposed scandal. I asked him to come and see me, telling him that I wanted to know what it was about. I assumed at the time that, if there was an embarrassing situation here, that as a bachelor it might be to do with a gay liaison. He flatly denied any misdemeanour. It never crossed my mind that there were any allegations of child abuse.
6. I believe that the facts in this witness statement are true.

Signed:

Dated: 12 March 2019

DPA