



Speech by

Mr RUSSELL COOPER

MEMBER FOR CROWS NEST

Hansard 17 September 1998

RUGBY LEAGUE

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—NPA) (10.28 p.m.): As we are coming up to grand final time in Queensland and throughout Australia generally, a lot has been said about football. I must be one of the traditionalists who enjoys Rugby League and Rugby Union. However, certain things have bothered me in recent times—indeed, they have bothered me for the past 10 years. When we were growing up, we all learnt the various positions of play on the field. When certain codes decide to change the numbers of those positions, it makes it rather confusing.

Once upon a time, a fullback was No. 1, the wings were 2 and 5, the centres were 3 and 4, the five-eighth and the half were 6 and 7, and so on through the forwards. When they get a bit disappointed with that, they change the numbers around just to confuse the fans. Then, of course, they are not happy with that and they change the scoring pattern, so that instead of getting three points for a try, it is now four.

Mr SPEAKER: It is a sign of old age, I think.

Mr COOPER: Mr Speaker, I know Bunny Pearce came from your electorate of Redcliffe. He was a fabulous footballer, as were the Cherrys from Roma. The list can go on forever—Artie Beetson, Ray Higgs, Charlie Frith. The names go on and on.

What we, as traditional fans, do not like to see is everything being changed to suit television. I love to see Australia taking the field in their green guernseys with the gold "V". When I was in Sydney, I used to be a fan of St George, which played in white guernseys with a big "V". They changed that just for the sake of television. I hope we never see anything here similar to the American gridiron, where a team takes the field for about five or 10 seconds, gets a bit puffed and is replaced by another team. Because it looks good on television, they wear big helmets and other protective gear.

What annoys me about Rugby League—I love it—is that when a scrum is set down the ball cannot possibly be put right into the hooker. He might as well not be in the scrum. I remember the days of Ken Kearney and other terrific footballers. Now the ball is put in the second row or behind the lock's feet. That is supposed to be football. As far as I am concerned, it is not football.

Time expired.
