



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

Hansard 18 August 1999

TRANSPLANTATION AND ANATOMY AMENDMENT BILL

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (9.21 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Transplantation and Anatomy Amendment Bill. Tonight I intend to be reasonably brief in my address. I spoke to the amendment and now I have an opportunity to speak in the second-reading debate.

When this Bill was first introduced the member for Thuringowa was a member of One Nation. The Bill was proudly introduced as one of the first Bills that One Nation brought to this Parliament. When the Bill was introduced there was a parade of people from both sides of the Chamber congratulating the member on such a thoughtful contribution to the Parliament. I thought I saw consensus because this was something that was so very important that it crossed party lines. Because of the sensitivity of the issue I thought the Bill would receive support from both sides. Since that time we have seen support for the Bill dwindle.

It grieves me that we rush legislation through this Parliament; yet, when something as important as this legislation comes along we analyse it to the nth degree, we throw it to committees and we push it and prod it until we can find something inherently wrong with it. That is what saddens me.

The Bill itself is very good. The aims of the legislation are inherently very good. I can understand some of the points that have been made. The LCARC review of the Transplantation and Anatomy Amendment Bill extended to some 41 pages. After the amendment was dealt with I believed that the Bill would make it to the Committee stage. I thought that this review would bring about a number of amendments which would make the legislation very workable and start saving some of the lives that it was designed to save.

Dr Naylor and Ms Day from the John Tonge Centre had this to say—and I think this hits at the heart of the problem—

"Given that the types of deaths that result in organ/tissue donation are usually tragic and unexpected, it is imperative that tissue and organ donation programs somehow accommodate the sensitivities of the deceased's family and avoid causing unnecessary additional distress. Many families who have consented to organ/tissue donation consider this decision provided them with something positive to come out of an otherwise tragic situation. This is because they are consulted, and provided with the opportunity to consider donation, rather than it proceeding against their wishes. The danger of the proposed Bill is that needs of the family may be disregarded once consultation is no longer a legal necessity. This may lead to complaints and adverse publicity, which may reduce the availability of organs and tissues."

This issue is about education and awareness of what can be achieved once we get past the sensitive aspects of the matter.

As a police officer, I have delivered many death messages. I have actually been in motor vehicles holding people together. I have worked with ambulance officers, holding compress bandages and watching blood drip through my fingers. I have accompanied people to hospitals. Unfortunately, I have been there when they have passed on. I have been with the grieving families. It is not a nice situation to be in. I feel for the people who have to work with the families. A lot of the people have ticked the particular box which took the distressing situation away from the grieving families—the mums

and the dads and the brothers and the sisters. These are the people who have to make the decision at a later time.

A lot of people have told me that they would have felt a lot better if the decision was taken out of their hands. When they are present and have to physically turn off the machine and make the decision they become deeply affected. I believe most people would not want to be in that situation. These people are going to suffer some difficulty. If the matter is legislatively taken out of their hands they would not have to suffer the grief of making the decision. I have personally seen this.

Mr Wilson: You have got no evidence of that.

Mr FELDMAN: I have been with too many people too many times to even respond to that.

Tonight I want to let the member for Thuringowa know that we still wholeheartedly support this Bill. The members of One Nation hope that the Bill proceeds to the Committee stage. Instead of LCARC being critical and not coming up with reasons to support the Bill, perhaps it could have suggested amendments which would take this Bill forward from where it presently stands. This legislation has not moved in the last 12 months. We are still here debating this legislation. Personally, I believe that is shameful.

I truly hope that all those people who came across the Chamber and congratulated the member for Thuringowa for the astuteness and credibility of the Bill will support him and get the Bill to the Committee stage, where it can be looked at and amended to a degree where it is acceptable to both sides of the House and to the community in general. This legislation will assist the community at large. I believe the purpose of this Bill is to assist the people who need organs. I will conclude on that point.
