



Speech by
**Hon. BRIAN
LITTLEPROUD**

MEMBER FOR WESTERN DOWNS

Hansard 10 November 1999

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs—NPA) (9.36 p.m.): In rising to support this Bill proposed by the member for Toowoomba North, I see this debate as a comparison between two things. The Bill is calling for a little bit of self-denial from we of the here and now because we think that we should give full respect to those people about whom the member for Fitzroy spoke—those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who are still suffering. I bring the debate down to that issue: we are calling for a bit of self-denial on one day of the year because we think that we owe it to the nation and to those people to make sure that we pay due respect on Anzac Day.

I want to give members some sort of an explanation of why I am speaking tonight. I have been alive long enough, I think, to have grown up in an era of self-discipline and conformity. I suppose that is the sort of thing that the British Empire was built on; that if you were not quite normal, you had to go and make yourself normal and fit in with the group. And you might have thought that was a bit tough, but it did you a lot of good and you ended up realising that, for the common good, you had to change your ways a little bit. Since then, the psychologists of the world and all those people who are studying human thought and human behaviour have got us to the "me" era. The member for Fitzroy was talking about an Act in 1995, which was part of the way down the track, when we thought that we could be respectful for half a day and then do some trading. As a society, we went along with that because we had come to accept that sort of thing. But we have gone further into the "me" era, when everything is for "me".

I am speaking today because I sense what people out there are thinking. People came to me when they heard about the incident on the Gold Coast. They thought it was a bit over the top and they said, "Surely, these people who have access to liquor outlets until the wee hours of the morning can show just a little bit of self-denial on this one occasion. We have a pretty free and easy sort of a lifestyle, but on this one occasion surely we can show a bit of self-denial and due respect for that specific day."

I thought about this for a while before I spoke tonight. I thought about the way that things have changed since I was a kid. I lived in the country, and we did not get to town for Anzac Day. But we eventually went to live in Chinchilla, and I saw my first Anzac Day parade in the fifties. It was still close enough to the end of World War II for there to be a bit of open emotion. I did not miss too many marches. I marched with the local State school and watched the parades go by. I think I recognised that there were blokes marching in those parades who could be my uncle or the next-door neighbour or the butcher. They were just ordinary Joes around town, and I knew them. But when they all stood there together and the band started to play and they swung off down the street in ranks of three or four, it was something special. That was my first impression. Thinking back, I can see that we became a bit blase during the 1960s and 1970s. That was a time when only returned servicemen, the boy scouts and a few other people turned up. It was a voluntary matter for the schools and a couple of students turned up. Thankfully, through the late 1980s and into the 1990s we saw something of a resurgence.

I have two memories that I can share with honourable members. The Dalby Agricultural College has some 160 students—all boys of 18 or 19 years of age; the same age as those blokes who went off to the various theatres of war around the world. The students took part in the street parade in Dalby.

They were wearing R. M. Williams boots, white moleskin trousers, plaited kangaroo hide belts, Akubra hats, and please yourself with the shirt. However, it was a uniform.

My memory went back to the Coo-ee March where men marched from rural New South Wales to Sydney, recruiting as they went. A re-enactment of that march occurred on the Darling Downs a short time ago. While I watched the march in Dalby, I thought to myself, "These young fellows have got something here." They were keeping alive the memory of what our servicemen were all about when they were prepared to go overseas and serve their country.

More recently, I have been impressed with the school cadet corps at Chinchilla. Cadet corps are voluntary these days. We all went through the cadets at school, whether they be Army cadets or Air Force cadets. We had to polish our boots, and that sort of thing, and I must say that I did not like it very much. I watched the way these kids presented themselves in Chinchilla. They presented themselves on the parade ground with pride and I was impressed with their movements around the cenotaph.

A change is occurring. People are prepared to put aside the "me" attitude and be part and parcel of the national spirit. I believe that there are people in our community who do not think it is unreasonable to support the Bill which has been introduced by the member for Toowoomba North. I believe that we can ask for a little bit of self-denial. We gain something by acting collectively. People in the trade union movement say that, on their own, they are nothing, but collectively they are a strong force. That applies to our nation as well.

There are people in our community who think it is indecent that some young people, who are probably having a good time, can do such things at an Anzac Day ceremony on the Gold Coast. People in my part of the world have said to me, "That should not happen." It is obvious that these young people were thoughtless. I believe that we can ask the Minister to amend the Liquor Act to allow a little bit of self-denial on this one day—a day that has established the character of Australians.

We are asking people to pay respect to those who paid the supreme sacrifice, to those who are still suffering, and to the families who are left. I am not here to score political points. I can understand the various points of view that have been put forward tonight. I can also remember some of the emotional speeches that were made by honourable members when we last debated this Bill. I did not contribute on the last occasion, but I have thought long and hard about the matter. I am prepared to stand up tonight and say that I think that the attitude of our young people has changed. They are more conservative these days. To some degree, they are putting aside the "me" attitude and they recognise that strength can be gained by being part of the community.
