



Speech by
**Hon. BRIAN
LITTLEPROUD**

MEMBER FOR WESTERN DOWNS

Hansard 24 November 1999

TRADE MEASUREMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs—NPA) (5.31 p.m.): During his speech, the member for Bulimba recalled some incidents relating to weights and measures, which prompted me to recall one of my old memories. In 1960, I was a young schoolteacher at Dulacca. In those days, Dulacca was a pretty small place—it is smaller now. I remember a chap named Ted Thompson, an old truckie who had passed the stage of being useful as a truckie and had taken on the job of barman at the local hotel. Of a Friday afternoon, the locals used to gather at the pub. One night, Ted was talking about when he was shifting sand—he must have been in the building industry, as was the member for Bulimba—and insisted that dry sand was a lot heavier than wet sand. The principal of the school, who was with me, asked, "Do you mean to say that a ton of dry sand is heavier than a ton of wet sand?" Of course, Ted, was remembering his days when he was working with trucks. He knew what he was talking about in terms weight per cubic metre, but did he not quite understand the nuance of the argument. Actually, it was not worth while going to the pub that afternoon. There were all sorts of foul things said about smart alec schoolteachers.

Mr Bredhauer: All of them true.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The Honourable Minister for Transport should speak for himself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for allowing me that levity. In relation to the Bill before the House, I draw the attention of the Minister to an issue that arose in my electorate about two years ago. At that time, I did not get a satisfactory result. I thought that just a bit of commonsense was needed to resolve the problem. A gentleman in Jandowae owns a trucking firm. He also has a public weighbridge. He has nothing against the requirement for the scales to be checked. However, he called me in a rather irate state and said that, although the department has the responsibility of checking the scales—and this weighbridge takes weights up to 20 tonnes or 30 tonnes—what gets up his nose is that, although the department found that there was a fault with the scales, it was not allowed to adjust them on the spot. He explained to me that he then had to contact a firm that adjusts scales. They had to come out to him in a seven tonne or eight tonne truck with all sorts of heavy equipment on it. They charged him mileage, and it cost him about \$1,700 to get the scales adjusted.

I realise that the Bill proposes that, if the error is in favour of the consumer, there will be some leniency granted. I have also read the amendment that will be proposed by the member for Lockyer, which needs to be considered pretty carefully. The chap who owned the weighbridge asked me, "Why the dickens can't the department, as well as check, make the adjustment necessary and charge a fee, or why can't we licence the people who sell the scales so that they go out and check the scales and if they are wrong—and they have the right equipment—to then make the adjustment?" This issue becomes especially important during the wheat harvest. This chap has people coming to him on the way to deliver grain to grain merchants. For them, time is of the essence. If someone arrives with 12 tonnes or 15 tonnes of grain and this bloke is caught with scales that are not working properly, in his favour, he has 28 days during which he cannot do a thing about it; he has to close down his weighbridge. That does not seem very sensible. I ask the Minister to discuss this issue with her department and work out some way in which the department can licence the people who sell the scales to be able to make the checks in accordance with a service agreement with the department and then make the adjustments and charge the person for it. If that can be done, I think that we might save a lot of inconvenience for the people who own the scales, save a lot of inconvenience for people who need to use those scales and also overcome a problem that does not seem to me to be insurmountable.