



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 17 August 1999

CENSURE OF MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (6.47 p.m.): This is an interesting debate because we have before us an interesting array of interests. I cannot help wishing to respond to some of the comments made by the honourable member for Nicklin. I understand his concern about gambling in the community, and I understand that very well. Contrary to some of the sloppy journalism that I have seen in recent times, I actually share that concern. Indeed, as Minister, I have been looking at ways in which we can bring the gaming genie back under control in Queensland before it gets right away from us. That is why I established a review into gaming matters in this State, and I eagerly await the opportunity to be able to act upon its recommendations.

However, I believe that although the honourable member for Nicklin has a genuine concern in relation to this matter, his support for the motion is built upon an incorrect premise. The fact is that, as the former Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon, told the Parliament in March last year when the interactive gambling Bill was being supported by all members of the House—and the member for Gladstone will well remember her contribution to the debate—the then Treasurer said that we have had interactive gambling in this State since 1962. It has occurred ever since the TAB took phone bets. The interactive gambling legislation is not just about the Internet. We should not be mistaken into believing that. The interactive gambling legislation is much, much broader indeed.

So although I accept the sincerity of the comments made by the member for Nicklin, I believe that this is a much more significant issue and I believe that this censure motion is extraordinarily premature. I find it incomprehensible that the Opposition, after all their fulminating over the past few weeks and talking about principles and standards and so on and so forth, should be quaking with fear at the prospect of the Auditor-General bringing his report back to this Parliament, quaking in fear that the Auditor-General might just find that the Office of Gaming Regulation acquitted itself with the utmost probity in relation to the Gocorp application, and quaking with fear that, in relation to this matter, the Auditor-General may just find that the Office of the Treasurer conducted itself in a manner that was beyond reproach. The Opposition is so worried because that report will demonstrate the absolutely hypocritical position that it has taken in relation to this matter.

Apart from the member for Nicklin, there are two groups in this debate: those who should know better and those who will never know any better. I direct these points to those who should know better. In relation to the points that were raised in the argument this afternoon, I reiterate that there were no special deals for anyone—Gocorp or anyone else. Contrary to the claims of Liberal Party members, there was no head start for anyone because the regulations of asking for applications went up on 1 October and anyone could apply. There was no free kick for anyone. Far from looking after mates, I remind honourable members that one of the so-called mates actually fell foul of the probity process and was excluded from his position as a director of Navari. I also remind the House that Gocorp did not get the tax concession that it was after and it did not get the length of licence that it was after. So much for having connections in the right places! I must admit that it really sickened me when I saw some of the rubbish being published in the papers about Ipswich Inc and all of the elaborate connections that people must have. I place on the record here and now that maybe all sorts of things exist in "Ipswich Inc", but—and I direct this to the Courier-Mail—no-one has yet alleged that I have received the Order of Lenin. It should just think about that.

I have the utmost confidence in the Office of Gaming Regulation and its professionalism and its processes. However, I find it quite extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition, a person who learned his political standards at the feet of the likes of Russ Hinze and Don Lane, can come in here and talk about misconduct meaning the same thing as ethical behaviour. If he and other members opposite believe that, it is little wonder that they sit where they sit today. As I said in the House this afternoon, good politics and ethical behaviour are not at opposite ends of the spectrum. Good politics means ethical behaviour, and that is exactly what this Government delivers.

Time expired.
