



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 22 July 1999

INTERACTIVE GAMBLING (PLAYER PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs PRATT (Barambah—IND) (12.09 a.m.): In rising to speak on this Bill, I have to say firstly that I am quite disgusted at the way it is being rushed through the House. I support everything that the member for Gladstone has said. There are so many discrepancies and grey areas in this Bill that I cannot believe that anyone could actually propose it. I have a few concerns and I have drafted an amendment to the Bill, which I will explain later. My gut instinct tells me that this situation is a bad one.

One of my major concerns with this Bill is in regard to sections that do not hinder the disqualified person from disposing of non-complying interests to related persons. As I said, I will expand on that later. I cannot see how anyone on the Government side of the House who is truly sincere could not support the amendment that I will be moving. I will be watching with interest to see how it goes.

No-one on this side of the House has had time to analyse the Bill properly simply because we did not have it. I have listened to the arguments put by the members on this side. Many reasons have been put forward as to why this Bill is unnecessary; in fact, the retrospectivity of the Bill seems to negate this unseemly need for haste. I find the Premier's need to rush this Bill through the House totally unwarranted, and it really does arouse my suspicions.

When our stood-down Treasurer voiced his opinion, he addressed much of his speech to "those who should know better and to those who will never know better". This was an outburst that I felt was one of either absolute arrogance or a reflex action of a cornered animal that attacks anything and anyone in its path. Time will bear witness as to which is which, and perhaps the charitable will forgive him on either count.

I have heard many interjections and accusations from the Government members directed at the Opposition for allegedly participating in similar questionable behaviour. That may or may not be true; I do not know because I was not here at the time and therefore I cannot really comment on the Opposition's behaviour. However, I cannot see that the Opposition's behaviour justifies or excuses any action undertaken by any other member in this House. Two wrongs have never made a right. Our actions are our own responsibility and the then Treasurer, Mr Hamill, had the final responsibility in this matter and he must bear whatever consequences follow. Although there may not be any illegality in Mr Hamill's actions, an analysis of his actions begs the question as to the then Treasurer's thinking. Was he corrupt, was he inept or was he just plain stupid? Whatever it was, it does not bode well for Queensland.

The Premier has stated continually how this Government would lift the standards of Parliament and restore the people's faith in politicians. To that end, the then Treasurer has not aided the Government by his actions in granting this licence. Right must not just be done; it must be seen to be done. It is the moral duty of all who sit in this place to set an example.

This Bill will be passed when it is put to the vote tonight; there is no arguing about that. But the Labor Government should not take any satisfaction from this, nor should Mr Hamill take any comfort from the defeating of the censure motion moved against him today. Only the unscrupulous would actually gain satisfaction from what I have seen today as a nobbled Parliament. The actions of this Government in rushing this legislation through the House will be seen as perhaps not illegal but unscrupulous and maybe immoral. That time has not been allocated for members to scrutinise this Bill

in detail smacks of a cover-up. What is this Government trying to hide? Perhaps nothing, so why the rush? The people of Queensland are not stupid. They will analyse this and they will do it very, very carefully. The people of Queensland as a whole have lost respect for politicians, and after this who could blame them?

There are worthwhile aims in this Bill, but there are also too many areas left unclear. This may be due to the haste with which the Bill has been presented or simply because it is poorly written. As I have said, I would like to see it go back and be redrafted, and I would like to see at least the minimum 13 days allowed for perusal of it. Whatever happens, I cannot support this Bill.
