



Speech by

Mr G. HEALY

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Hansard 14 April 1999

ANZAC DAY TRADING HOURS

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North—NPA) (6.07 p.m.): I rise to second the motion moved by the member for Gladstone and the subsequent amendment that she has moved. In doing so, I thank her for her cooperation in relation to this issue.

This motion is all about timing. It is all about requesting the Government to agree to the debate on a piece of legislation by way of a private member's Bill that should be passed to enable sufficient time to elapse so that the provisions of the Bill will come into play before 25 April 1999. The coalition and the member for Gladstone are not trying to do anything sneaky here or trying to do anything underhanded. The private member's Bill, which I introduced, has been left on the general business sheet for the required amount of time for the Bill to mature. We have not attempted to bring the Bill in any earlier to try to have it rushed through in an improper way; we have done it through the normal parliamentary procedure. We are seeking the Government's consideration that the Bill be debated as general business item No. 1 tonight in the time allocated to the debate on private members' Bills simply to ensure that the provisions contained in the Bill will be in place before midnight on 24 April this year.

I do not think that that is too much to ask this Parliament to consider. I do not think that it is too much at all. At least then it will give members from both sides of the House the opportunity to engage in full and frank debate on the issue. It will also mean that that full and frank debate can have some real purpose.

By agreeing to debate this legislation tonight, the Parliament can send a clear and unambiguous message to thousands of Queenslanders that, as legislators, we are prepared to listen to their concerns and, at the same time, we have the capacity to fix a problem in a relatively short period. Let us not have any watered-down version of this motion or amended motion. Let us not have any wishy-washy amendment to the member for Cunningham's original motion or the amended version of it. Such action is meant to try to get the Government out of a jam, because it is in a jam with this issue. We know that any attempt to stop this legislation from being passed tonight during the allotted time for the debate on private members' Bills or to delay its passage to proclamation prior to the suggested date will be met in the electorate at large with a great deal of anger. I assure members opposite that the Opposition will leave no stone unturned in its efforts to echo that message loud and clear throughout the length and breadth of this State.

This morning in the House I tabled a petition that was signed by a variety of concerned citizens from across the State who want to see the Parliament do everything it can to pass the legislation tonight. I call on all members opposite who have been contacted by people from their own electorates—and I know who they are because people have phoned me and said that they have been in contact with their local members—who have expressed concerns on this particular issue. I want them to think long and hard about what they are going to do at the conclusion of this debate tonight. Are they going to listen to those concerns or are they simply going to cave in and ignore the sort of person who took time to sign the petition? That petition has been tabled. They can look at the signatures and see where those people are from. They might recognise a few of those signatures, because some of those people are from their own electorates. The issue has stirred emotion in Labor electorates, National Party electorates, Liberal Party electorates, One Nation electorates and those electorates represented by Independent members.

Attached to a lot of those petitions are letters. I will not read all of them, but I will read part of one of them. It states—

"Please find enclosed the signed petition ..."

I know the people who signed have different political views but on this occasion all agreed.

It would be great if commonsense for a change got both sides together ..."

Again I say to members opposite: do not take this issue lightly. They should think long and hard about what they are going to do at the conclusion of this debate tonight, because if they return to their electorates tomorrow or the next day having chosen to ignore the people who have signed that petition and they are not prepared to support it, they do so at their own risk.

Time expired.
