



Speech by

JACK PAFF

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Hansard 27 October 1999

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—ONP) (10.09 p.m.): I rise to support the Liquor Amendment Bill 1999. We celebrate Anzac Day so that we can appreciate the sacrifices made by Australian soldiers. We also celebrate Anzac Day so that we will always remember and may learn from the past in order to pave the way for a better future.

Anzac Day should be a day on which each and every Australian stops for a moment or two and thinks about what occurred in the wars and the hardships that they caused to many young Australians, including the effects of battle upon their emotions and those of their loved ones. Such remembrance should put pain as well as pride and gratitude into the hearts of many compassionate people. The cold, hard and tragic reality of war should be felt by those who take the time to remember. Young Australian men, some of them boys, suffered immensely through fighting for our freedoms.

About six months ago in this House I heard the Minister, Mr Gibbs, give a very similar speech. At that time I also took great interest in the contribution of the member for Fitzroy. I went back to my RSL and made inquiries. Not many people took a lot of notice of those speeches. However, quite a few people called into my office lodging complaints, saying that they wanted something done about this.

So many years ago, servicemen fought for our freedom. Today, those freedoms are being encroached upon by a younger generation who do not know the reasons for the fighting or what took place. Society places too much importance on alcohol. Many of our young people could answer many questions about alcoholic beverages and often even different types of drugs, yet few would be able to answer questions about wars—who fought in them, when they were fought or over what issues they were fought. "Lest we forget" is not just a saying for one generation; it should transcend all future generations. Surely Anzac Day—the one day of the year that is set aside for remembrance—is more important than consuming alcohol until all hours of the morning.

I was interested to hear the Minister say that all the other Australian States have quite liberal drinking laws on Anzac Day. Queensland is unique with its strict liquor laws. Why could Queensland not show the way and introduce strict drinking laws in relation to Anzac Day? Why should we not be the State that shows the rest of Australia what is the right thing to do? Queensland was the first State in Australia to introduce laws in relation to seat belts. Queensland led the way on that issue, and eventually Australia led the world. There is nothing wrong with leading the way.

This Bill ensures that people leaving nightspots at a time that conflicts with dawn services will be sober and less disruptive. It ensures that the dawn services are honoured in the appropriate manner. I am sure that in some way it may encourage our youth to give Anzac Day services the priority that they deserve. Who wants to be walking around dawn services with the swill, rubbish, tins or whatever else might have been left lying around by hung-over youths? I think that the dignity of Anzac Day should be maintained. Some young ones will be bitter that their planned night of annihilation will be cut short. However, I think that others will stop and think and agree with what this Bill will do. Without this Bill, Anzac Day eve is just another night out with no consequence or appreciation of what the next day means. At least this Bill will increase the awareness of Anzac Day among our youth, which may lead to increased discussion and thought on the issue and increased respect for its meaning. Today, when we consider our multicultural society in Australia and in particular in Queensland, we realise that a lot of young people do not even know what Anzac Day is all about. What is wrong with turning off the tap at

midnight so that the older generation and those people who know all about Anzac Day can remember Anzac Day with some reverence?

Owners of clubs and hotels will miss out on profits from the sale of alcohol for the period that this Bill determines. That is a sacrifice that has little comparison to the sacrifices made by our diggers. I think that the sacrifice of doing away with alcohol for just a few hours is not something that is so terribly wrong. I am sure that most members of this House would agree with the importance of this Bill—as they have demonstrated in previous debates—in that it will place Australian soldiers in higher esteem than the ability of club owners to make a tidy profit and revellers to sink a few more drinks. Let us place the sacrifices side by side and compare them for what they really are—the club owners: profit; the party goers: good times; young Australian soldiers: their lives. To which sacrifice would members give priority through their vote tonight?

In terms of drinking, Anzac Day is not all that important. In that way, I do not think that we are getting at the issue, which is an amendment to the Liquor Act. Tonight we are trying to amend the Liquor Act, not to change what took place in the past. I appeal to this Parliament to take cognisance of the facts and to show the people of Queensland that we can lead the way. Surely to God we can do without just a few hours of drinking.
