



Speech by

Mrs J. GAMIN

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard 27 October 1999

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh—NPA) (8.30 p.m.): On 25 April 1916 Australia commemorated the first Anzac Day, the anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. Just a few weeks later, in the first issue of the Parramatta High School Magazine in June 1916, the following article appeared. The article was simply signed with the initials "SK". The author was not a member of the school staff or of the magazine editorial committee. It is assumed that "SK" was a student who at the time of writing would never have expected that, more than 80 years later, his or her words would be quoted in full in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Queensland. The article states—

"Cradled amid the stunted scrub of Gallipoli, swept by the bleak winds of the Northern Winter, bleached by the mellow sunshine of the Bizantine Summer, the bones of our mighty dead moulder on an alien strand. No stately mausolea mark the holy ground, and the piping notes of vagrant gulls, shrilling above the deep monotone of the sea, are their only lullaby. But here, in our distant Southern home are the sobbings of women and the plaudits of men, to echo down the corridors of time for evermore.

In the twilight of the dawning, grey transports gliding, like phantom shapes upon the dark waters, sent forth their complement of reckless Australians who clambered laughingly into the awaiting pinnacles—leapt laughing amid the steel-churned surf, and dashed laughingly up the sheer slopes of the Phracian Peninsula. Unlike the Athenians of old, they needed no Miltiades to point the way. Above them spat the deadly machine guns, and yawned the mighty artillery. In these grim harbingers of death lay their objective, and the gallant lines swept up and onward. Men to right and left coughed softly, and slid down into the dwarfed scrub with sightless eyes staring blankly into infinity; but, pausing not, the shattered ranks of heroes swept on and ever upward.

The crests were won, the while a world wondered; but dotted about the desolate landscape was the unmeasured cost—the broken forms of those for whom the sun had set. Aye! for them the sun of life has set, but not in vain. Down the alley-ways of time rings the deathless glory of their deeds, and the imperishable memory of a heroism past comprehension. Their sun has set indeed, but beyond the girdling night of death lies the promise of a golden dawning when in the warriors' Valhalla they will be translated into a new and perfect day, where the sun of Eternity blazes upon the goodly company foregathered. And there, shoulder to shoulder with the conquering Epirotes of Pyrrhus, the war-worn Carthaginians of Hannibal, the stolid Macedonians of Alexander, and the stark Romans of Scipio, they will take their stand amid the heroes of the ages. A thin line of mighty Australians, they will ruffle it with the panoplied warriors of Antiquity—first of all the world, in that daring which is born of rugged hearts and good red, pulsing blood. Their's the undying fame; our's the bounding pride and the stifled grief, that came into being on that memorable April morn, when Australia left the cradle of peace and stepped forth into the estate of Nationhood."

The words of this student's article from 1916 might sound a little outdated to our more modern ears, but they bring vividly to mind that the meaning of Anzac Day is that honour is given to the personal courage and character of our fighting forces.

Gallipoli was a defining moment for Australia as a new nation. At Gallipoli men from all backgrounds and classes from the newly federated Australia created the essence of what it means to be an Australian—courage under fire, grace under pressure, giving a hand to a mate.

As the years have gone by since the first commemoration, the Anzac story has evolved into a commemoration of the personal qualities of our fighting forces in many theatres of war, spread out over the whole globe. The legend is not of sweeping military victories so much as of triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity.

Here this evening as members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, as community leaders in this State, we have a unique opportunity to honour and support our gallant servicemen and women who have served in many theatres of war, those who have died in service to our nation and those who were fortunate to survive the horrors of war—all those who served in any way to defend their loved ones and their country. This Bill deserves the support of the House and I commend it to the House.
