



Speech by

Mr M. VEIVERS

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard 10 November 1999

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mr VEIVERS (Southport—NPA) (9.43 p.m.): I rise to have a quiet talk on the Liquor Amendment Bill. I will not take much longer than the member for Western Downs. I support the private member's Bill introduced by the member for Toowoomba North—not for political reasons, but simply because I live on the Gold Coast. I have to say to the honourable member for Fitzroy, whom I notice has left the Chamber, that people on the Gold Coast do not always act as responsibly as do other country people in Queensland. Sadly, I have to admit that. I represent the electorate of Southport and we do have some undesirables on the beachfront. I know that this occurs in every city, but we have our fair share of them.

I believe that the Liquor Amendment Bill introduced by the member for Toowoomba North is trying to suppress the mugs and the fools that we have in our community. On 25 April, we celebrate a very special day in the history of our quest for peace, justice and equality. As the member for Western Downs said, we all take an active part in the various ceremonies. At the Southport RSL we find that the crowds are increasing.

As the member for Western Downs said, for some time interest in Anzac Day seemed to be slipping away. The situation has changed on the Gold Coast. Some days prior to Anzac Day the school students march to Anzac Park to lay wreaths. Some 1,000 students take part and they are all warming up to Anzac Day. They are learning why those men and women went off to war. They know that they came back, but they were afflicted in some way—we see them all the time—and the students are learning why these people made such great sacrifices.

I had a couple of mates—one was a regular and one was a national serviceman—with whom I played football. They did not come back. When I was younger, I found it very hard to come to terms with that. When the Vietnam War veterans returned to Australia they were spat upon and urinated upon. It is no wonder that it has taken 20 or 30 years for them to settle down—if one could call it settling down. I am great mates with the majority of these fellows because I am in the same age group.

I get up every Anzac Day morning, have a shower, and get out there. I have been doing it for 13 years. I did it when I was in Beaudesert, and I am still doing it at Southport. One simply has to go there and feel it. People are starting to do that.

I have broken the law, too, Minister, on most of these occasions. I have drunk plenty of rum and coffee on those mornings. I do not drink coffee now because I am on a diet—I just thought I would get that across. I am not going to have rum in my tea, so I will be just having plain straight rum, probably. I have shouted a 90-litre keg, but I have been outdone by a fellow called Mr Fankhauser who bought all the one-litre bottles of Bundy rum at the Southport RSL. He is the late Mr Fankhauser now. His son has stepped into the breach. It is all part of getting together and remembering one's mates.

As the honourable member for Fitzroy said, the veterans get together and they just want to remember the good times. It is impossible to get them to talk about the bad times. We have blokes who had been in Changi. Wally Row is 85 years of age and he drinks rum with the best of them. He has never had a heart problem. He said to me, "It's easy, son. I can tell you why. For four years I had water and rice. It's the best thing. My arteries are clean. I am a surfer now." He is surfboard riding these days. These men just look to enjoy the sorts of things in life that we take for granted.

This is what Anzac Day is about—the young people, the mums and dads who march at 8 o'clock in the morning, those who stand there with their flags, their flowers, with their kids on their shoulders, or those who stand there clapping. That is Anzac Day— remembering the people who served and those who did not come home. We want to keep those traditions.

I am not going to get into the politics of the whole darned thing. As I said, I had a couple of mates who did not come back. I would not be speaking if I was not serious about this issue. I would not be bothered talking. These days, I do not have to talk; I am a junior backbencher. I do not have to muck around with it. I am treated almost like Russell Cooper; they have already got me in the retirement village. I am speaking because I am serious about this issue.

In contrast to the honourable member for Fitzroy, I have been asked by members of the RSL and some of those Vietnam vets to get up and tell members that they do not want any mugs or louts interrupting the Anzac Day dawn service. It may be, as the member for Western Downs said, that those people can sacrifice their drinking from midnight until the next morning. However, some of us will break the law and we will have our rum and cokes. I do not know how the Minister will get around that.

I was the shadow Minister for Tourism prior to the member for Toowoomba North holding that position. I do not know how one can condone breaking the law. It is a tradition for people to drink rum and coffee and play two-up on Anzac Day. If people are hooting and hollering and having a great time and they are not upsetting anyone, I do not know how we can stop it. The boys at the Southport RSL said, "Just support the legislation and hope Gibbsy says 'yes'." That is all I can ask for.
