



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (10.17 p.m.): Firstly, I must say that I have been absolutely horrified by the pathetic contributions of some of those opposite, but definitely not all of those opposite. Those members accuse this side of the House of not respecting our diggers by not supporting this Bill. What rot! The general public is sick of that type of politics. How dare they question the respect of members on this side of the House! The members opposite who talk about respect must be kidding. Where was the respect from the members opposite for the feelings of the stolen generation when it came to the apology motion moved in this House? There was no respect! I respect people's feelings on this matter. However, that does not mean that the accusation of lack of respect by members on this side has any credence.

There has been one Anzac Day since Labor took office and no problems were reported. We stand by our record of ensuring that the police and the licensing authorities are on the ground to ensure that no problems occur, and no problems have occurred. We have heard from all sides of this House that the attendance level at dawn services and marches is increasing. Do members think that parents would take their young children to these dawn services or parades in increasing numbers if there were problems with so-called drunken yobbos? No! Members from both sides of the House have said that the numbers at dawn services and marches are increasing. I think that the facts speak for themselves.

The member for Ipswich West talked about young people. We have to be very careful not to stereotype young people in particular. Many young people have a great deal of respect for the diggers. Most members would attend many school events on Anzac Day, whether they be at primary schools or high schools, and we see the numbers of young people who also attend other services. Some young people do go to nightclubs and stay until 3 o'clock in the morning, but they then stay in town to attend the dawn service and show their respect to the diggers. That is the majority of young people, not the minority as some members opposite have claimed. Young people do have respect for our diggers. I am amazed by the different school events that I attend on Anzac Day, although I have been lucky enough to do that only in the last year and a bit.

It is absolutely false to say that today's young people do not know what Anzac Day is about. I think that they know more about Anzac Day than I did when I was at school. More is taught about Anzac Day and it is given more respect than when I was at school.

A One Nation member interjected.

Mr REEVES: That is my point. The member for Ipswich West said that the majority of young people do not know what Anzac Day is about, but I think that that is false. I think that today's young people know more. The Australia Remembers campaign assisted in spreading that knowledge.

The Bill will not solve the problem completely. It may solve one component of the problem, that is, the incidents involving people coming from nightclubs. However, as the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing said, it will not solve the problem of people who have no respect for our diggers and who want to disrupt Anzac Day proceedings if those people come from private parties. This Bill offers no solutions to solving that problem. There are two ways of solving that problem. Firstly, as the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing said, we have to change the attitude of the people who sink to the gutter and are disrespectful to our diggers. The other way is to have sufficient police and licensing authority numbers on the ground. We did that this year and there were no problems. What occurred this year speaks for itself.

Passing this Bill does not solve the problem of people who get drunk at private parties and then go out to disrupt Anzac Day services. The only way that that problem can be stopped is by having police and licensing authority staff on the ground to stop such actions if they occur and by changing the culture of a very small minority of people. The only way to prevent the sorts of things that some members have talked about tonight is to have a police presence such as we had this year. I am sure that as the two Ministers involved—the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, who is responsible for licensing, and the Police Minister—have such a great respect for Anzac Day, that will continue to occur. I am sure that all future Governments will ensure that respect for this day is assured. Indeed, it would be good if more people on my right showed me some respect by listening to this speech.

My final point is probably my main point. This Bill will not ensure that the problem does not occur again. The Bill is based on the premise that the problem comes from the nightclubs. If that premise is wrong and the disruptive people are coming from private parties, the Bill will not solve the problem. To prove that the premise is not right, I cite the fact that more nightclubs stay open until 3 a.m. in Brisbane on Anzac Day than elsewhere, but I have not heard of any problems at dawn services in Brisbane.

Mr Borbidge: There are plenty of problems in Surfers Paradise.

Mr REEVES: It is my understanding that there was one incident. I am saying that the Bill is based on the premise that closing nightclubs early will solve the problem, but it will not. We have to have the police on the ground as we had this year. That solved the problem.

Mr Borbidge: You haven't given us one good reason why you oppose it.

Mr Seeney: What's the problem?

Mr REEVES: If those opposite want to interject, they should have listened to the first seven minutes of my speech. They talk about respect, but they should show some respect now. The issue in question is that the Bill will not solve the problem, if there is a problem.

I reiterate my first remark, which was that the accusation by some—and only some—members opposite that members on this side of the Chamber lack respect for our diggers was absolutely disgraceful. That is the kind of politics that the people are sick of. They have had enough of it.

Mr Healy: That's an insult to the purpose of this debate.

Mr REEVES: I have sat here and listened to people say that we are cowards and that we have no respect. The member for Crows Nest is nodding his head because he said that we do not have any respect. The member for Cunningham said that we were cowards. That is the kind of politics that the people are sick of. The member for Crows Nest has been involved in politics for a long time and I wish him a happy retirement. However, I repeat that that is the kind of politics that everybody is sick of. I do not think it helps the debate in this House. This is the third time that this issue has come up for debate, and that kind of language does not pay the House or the political system any credit. I cannot not support the Bill for the reasons that I have outlined.
