



Speech by

Mr SANTO SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard 9 December 1999

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (6.45 p.m.): I rise to briefly lend my personal support to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and, in particular, to commend the comments of the shadow Attorney-General, particularly as they relate to the concerns that are expressed within the community about an issue that really strikes at the heart of community sensitivity. Generally, I think that the community wants to feel safe from all sorts of people with ill intent. It wishes to be safe from harm that may come to them either accidentally or intentionally, as often is the case, by the premeditated actions of paedophiles. In addition, and more specifically, the community, and parents particularly, wish their children to be safe. To that extent, I support wholeheartedly the comments that were made by the honourable member for Gladstone in relation to this Bill being seen by some—and I think that those who fall within the ambit of the word "some" are unreasonable—to put some civil libertarian considerations above the absolute necessity to do whatever we can to keep our children safe from the ill that this Bill seeks to circumvent. There can be no greater responsibility of legislators than to look after the interests of children and the elderly. This Bill certainly goes towards looking after the safety and the long-term interests of children.

The amendment that has been proposed by the shadow Attorney-General, which seeks to make the Minister responsible for the notification of the whereabouts of paedophiles, is very deserving of support. As members of Parliament, should take more responsibility than we do. I remember very early in the life of the Beattie Labor Government the Honourable the Minister for Police coming into this Chamber and taking on many of the powers in terms of administering the Corrective Services system of this State. Some members on this side expressed some

reservations, but I had a lot of sympathy with the arguments that were put forward by the Minister for Police in relation to that Bill. He stated that the community expects us, the people who legislate, to also be as close as possible to our legislation. He stated further to the effect that "I am not going to let somebody else run the Corrective Services system of Queensland; I am going to run it myself." I think that that intent received a lot of support, and it still has a lot of support within the community. If representatives such as us in this place have given ourselves the legislative ability to be responsive, but we are not responsive to what the community wishes and desires, then the community can judge us far more harshly than otherwise would be the case at a future election.

I support strongly the amendment that will be put forward by the honourable the shadow Attorney-General. I think that the Minister, who I commend for introducing this amendment Bill, should go that extra step and take full responsibility for carrying out what I think is a very worthwhile intent and practice that will emanate from the passage of this Bill. So I strongly support both the Minister, and the shadow Attorney-General in his intention to move an amendment, which I think is very worth while. As long as this type of legislation is being put forward by members opposite, it will continue to enjoy the support of people on this side of the House.
