



Speech by

**SHAUN NELSON**

**MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS**

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**CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND PENALTIES AND SENTENCES AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr NELSON** (Tablelands—IND) (8.30 p.m.), continuing: Getting tough on crime does work. That is a fundamental truth that cannot be denied by anyone in this House, no matter what their political persuasion.

**Ms Boyle:** Ha!

**Mr NELSON:** Seriously, getting tough on crime is——

**Mr Fouras:** It was a good opening.

**Mr NELSON:** It was a very good opening. I have had a bit of time to calm down after my speech last week. I have had a good, long, hard think about some of the points that have been raised by the Government on this issue. For example, the member for Archerfield mentioned a couple of cases. I agree that there are a couple of interesting points—what I would consider points in law—that we should consider. In all those cases that were mentioned, and one in particular, that is, the farmer who, accidentally or whatever, shot someone——

**Ms Boyle:** Not accidentally.

**Mr NELSON:** Okay. He shot someone because his rifle discharged as he was climbing a fence; that person was killed, and therefore he was charged with a serious violent offence, namely, murder. I believe that those issues should properly be dealt with by a magistrate. Truth in sentencing actually affirms the role of the magistrates, the role of the judges and the role of the courts in this debate. It says to society that we have faith in our magistrates and we have faith in our judges and that, when they hand out sentences, they should be obeyed, adhered to and followed through 100%. I am talking about sentences for the serious violent offences as set out in this legislation. The whole point is that this is essentially a discussion on the belief that getting tough on crime works.

**Mr Fenlon:** It's a debate.

**Mr NELSON:** Debate, discussion— whatever the member wants to call it. I have done a bit of research and I have looked into some issues. I intend to talk mainly about the American model—not because I believe that it is the only model and not because I believe that what America does is right. But essentially, and as any sociologist will tell members, our society is following very closely behind American society—right or wrong, and whether or not I agree with it.

**Ms Struthers:** They have the highest gun ownership rate.

**Mr NELSON:** I will get to that. Whether or not I agree with it, our society is following that of America.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** The member for Archerfield had her chance to have a say. I am now having a say. That is what debating is all about: one person has their say and then the other person has their say.

**Mr Lucas:** Don't you like that? Aren't you prepared to debate the issue?



**Mr NELSON:** I thought the Premier said today that Government members do not interject, that they just sit there and listen, that this is a listening Government. Members on this side of the Chamber get hounded every day.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Nelson-Carr): Order! I do not think that the Premier said that Government members would not interject. Just get on with it, please.

**Mr NELSON:** Just get on with it, please? Lovely!

**Mr Lucas:** You're a delicate petal.

**Mr NELSON:** I am a delicate petal. The point is that, whether or not we agree with it, the American model is startling. I do not believe that anyone would disagree with that. The rate of crime in New York City has decreased through a triple whammy: the introduction of zero tolerance, the introduction of truth in sentencing and the reintroduction of the death penalty. Members cannot disagree with the fact that the murder rate in that city is down by 60% and the incidence of violent crime across-the-board is down by around 48%. Those are fundamental truths. New York City had a soaring crime rate at a level that we cannot even imagine here. We cannot even comprehend the sort of crimes that they have to deal with over there. What I am saying is that if it works in one of the toughest cities in the world, by lord it can work here.

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** Of course. Their population is higher than ours, as well. But the simple fact is that they have cracked down on crime. One interesting point about truth in sentencing is that now, in America, 28 States and the Federal Government—no matter what their political persuasion—have gotten rid of parole altogether and replaced it with truth in sentencing because of what happened in New York. In essence, what we are talking about is a political difference. I mentioned a few things to two members of the Labor Party in the lift tonight. I said that it is a fundamental difference of opinion or a difference of belief; that I, being a person of conservative persuasion, believe that the only way to deal with a serious violent offender or any person who decides to break the laws of the State is to punish them effectively under our laws—be it a \$10 or \$20 fine for jaywalking, or life imprisonment for murder—and those laws should be adhered to. What I am saying is that when a magistrate hands down a sentence, that criminal should serve 100% of his or her sentence.

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** There might be a complete difference between the people who live in Lytton and the people who live in the Tablelands electorate. The Queenslanders who live in Tablelands must be inherently different from the people who live in Lytton, Archerfield, Cairns and other electorates. But I must say that the member for Cairns only just won her seat, so she cannot be too proud of that. The tablelanders who come into my office, including card-holding members——

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr NELSON:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The people who are coming into my electorate office—and these are people of a Left persuasion—are saying to me that they are sick and tired of criminals getting sentences——

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** No, they certainly do not. They say that they are sick and tired of seeing criminals not serving the sentences that they receive. Coming from a police family, I have a certain insight into this, because I have watched criminals going before the courts time and time again. I have watched my father prosecute quite a few cases.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** My mum worked in a factory for most of her life, and she still does to this day—if the member for Archerfield wants to have a talk about that.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** I am quite proud of what my mother did.

**Mr Schwarten:** How many people of Queensland do you represent now?

**Mr NELSON:** 21,662. But I do not see how that has anything to do with this debate. The point is that people come into my office and say that they are sick and tired of criminals not being punished for their crimes. The people who will be affected by this Bill are people who have committed serious violent offences. I ask members to think about that for a minute. I am not talking about people who have picked a pocket.

**Mr Schwarten:** You've gone from 400,000 to 11,000, really.

**Mr NELSON:** I am the member for Tablelands, not the member for the rest of Queensland.



**Mr Swarten:** Ah! You've changed your view. What's changed in the intervening time? You got the big A from One Nation.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockhampton!

**Mr NELSON:** To correct the record there, I actually left. I was not kicked out.

**Mr Lucas:** Why did you leave?

**Mr NELSON:** The member can read the paper.

**Mr Lucas:** No, tell us why.

**Mr NELSON:** Stay tuned to this channel!

**Mr Lucas:** No, why you left is far more interesting. We're all listening. If you tell me why you left in some detail I'll promise——

**Mr NELSON:** I have eight minutes left. I can waste all the time I like, and we will be here until midnight.

As I said, we are talking about people who have committed serious violent offences. We are not talking about pickpockets or people who speed or shoplift. The heart of the matter is that we are talking about people who have committed serious violent offences— rape, murder, serious assault causing death and so forth. We are talking about crimes of the nature that I mentioned during the debate last Wednesday. I think that we get away from the story a bit when we try to get emotional and try to play party politics and say, "If we get hard on crime, all these people are going to suffer." That is not the case. This Bill seeks to address, by nature, only serious violent offenders. I personally do not believe that this is going to go far enough. I personally have certain views.

**Mr Lucas:** Make them serve 110%.

**Mr NELSON:** Damned straight! I am sure that members would know that, if I had my way, things would be a whole lot different, but I do not. I commend the member for Warwick and other members of the coalition for listening to the protest vote that was registered in this House on 13 June or July—I cannot remember—last year. What we are seeing here is a direct result—

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The interjections are too loud. I cannot hear the member.

**Mr NELSON:** These interjections are coming from a party that would never try to interrupt the business of the House!

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** No, I said coming from a party. You don't listen, either. Read Hansard— if you can.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Rockhampton!

**Mr NELSON:** The fundamental difference we are talking about here is that people have genuine concerns about a lot of issues. One of the issues that is constantly brought up to me in my electorate is crime. People are concerned about the increase in crime and the impact that it has on decent, honest citizens.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** I could have come in here and ranted and raved. I could have gone on as I did the other night. I admit that I got a bit wild the other night. I am trying seriously to tell honourable members that the people who democratically elected me to this House have sent this message to the Government. They are saying to the Government, "You are not listening to what we are saying. You are not feeling what we are feeling." I know that every single member of the Government represents his or her electorate, and represents it well. I also know that every Government member goes out into the electorate and hears these concerns.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** I am sure that even in Rockhampton people are saying this sort of thing. People are saying that they are sick and tired of not being listened to. People are saying that they have had enough. By Christ, do not think for even a minute that that protest vote is going to go away. Those opposite may have stopped the party that was born out of this protest vote, but they have not stopped the protest. It will not go away until the problems are addressed.

This Bill seeks to address those problems. The problems exist within the community. I agree that they are mainly problems of perception, but they are still there. They will haunt those opposite until they are well and truly gone from this House and retired.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.



**Mr NELSON:** Especially yourself. I tell you that right now. I know that every single member of this House who has been here for a few years received a bit of a jolt at the last election. That jolt was from the protest——

**An Opposition member:** Not the sort of jolt you will get.

**Mr NELSON:** Whether I am here in three years' time has absolutely nothing to do with the matter.

**An Opposition member:** It has everything to do with your performance.

**Mr NELSON:** It has nothing to do with the protest made by the citizens of Queensland— and Australians in general. The result of that protest is exactly what we are seeing here tonight.

**Mr Schwarten:** They voted for One Nation, not for you.

**Mr NELSON:** I don't argue that point. You are 100% correct.

**Mr Schwarten:** What are you going to do about it?

**Mr NELSON:** What I am doing about it is coming down here and trying intelligently to put forward a few concerns that people mention to me every day. If the Government chooses to ignore the concerns of the people of the Tablelands electorate, and if it chooses to marginalise those people and not listen to them, it is quite obvious what is going to happen at the next election. Members on this side of the House want to listen to people's concerns. If the Government continues to ignore the concept that it has marginalised a great number of people with regard to such concepts as truth in sentencing and the lack of responsibility that is portrayed through the leniency of the justice system, this thing will go on and on. It will not go away. The Labor vote will be reduced and those opposite will be hit where it hurts.

Remember that six seats on this side of the House were at one stage held by Labor Party members. Remember that that vote is not constant. It is all well and good for Labor members to slam people on this side of the House, but coalition members have learnt their lesson. They are trying to address some of the problems in their constituencies.

**Mr Lucas:** They have learnt never to give you preferences ever again.

**Mr NELSON:** To correct the record, I did not gain any preferences. I won against preferences. I watched Labor Party preferences try to keep me out, but Labor failed miserably because I polled 47%. Why? Because of the work I did in my electorate! I addressed issues such as this. I told people that their voice would be heard in this Parliament. No matter what the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing has to say, my voice will be heard in this Parliament because I can talk a hell of a lot louder than he can and I will not stop saying the things that are being said to me. I can tell the Minister right now that he can thank his lucky stars that it is me saying them and not some of the people in my electorate.

I challenge the Government right now to come up and have one of those little conferences in my electorate. Bring the Cabinet up to the Tablelands electorate and I will have 500 Tablelanders in there screaming the Government down about such things as truth in sentencing and natural justice because that is one thing that is being denied to the people of the Tablelands electorate and the people of this State in general. Unless those opposite start learning from their mistakes, in two and a half years the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing will be on this side of the Chamber and I will be sitting here laughing my heart out at the retractions he will have to make for what he has done to this State in the past couple of years. I tell the Minister now—and listen well——

Time expired.

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