



Speech by

**SHAUN NELSON**

**MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS**

Hansard 25 November 1999

### JUSTICE LEGISLATION BILLS

**Mr NELSON** (Tablelands—IND) (5.32 p.m.): I will keep my comments in relation to the Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) brief. Suffice to say that I support the Bills. I will be speaking to sections 7 and 8 which are the amendments to sections 56A and 56B.

**Mr Lucas:** You mean clauses.

**Mr NELSON:** The Bill says "section" (7) and (8), so I will just take it from there. I would like to confine my remarks to those two areas which deal with the protection of members of Parliament in the carrying out of their duties. I support most of the comments that have already been made in this debate. Even though I have very little respect for a few members of Parliament, I still believe that they should be able to go about their business—

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** Of course it is, and I am quite pleased that it is.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** The member for Warwick has my undying respect and gratitude, as does the member for Clayfield.

**Mr Bredhauer:** You can tell a leper by the company he keeps.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Reeves): Order! I remind the member to speak through the Chair.

**Mr NELSON:** There are many members, such as the Minister, for whom I have different feelings. Regardless of political persuasion, every member has been elected to this Parliament by their constituents and they should be allowed to carry out their duties. It is an interesting fact that in our society we find that the more approachable and open to scrutiny members of Parliament become, the higher is the level of discontent in the community. It is something of a paradox.

I was elected to this Parliament at the recent election which saw the rise of the One Nation Party. During that election campaign we saw community attitudes change to the extent that we had large protests against One Nation across a broad range of issues. Political feeling and anger was so evident in the community that threats were made against members of Parliament. I personally received threats. I am sure other members of this House have also received threats.

We are very fortunate to live in a society where very few of these threats are ever carried out. We do not see the level of political violence that we see in other countries. In some places, political violence has become a way of life. We can stop that happening in this country by ensuring that members of Parliament are protected in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

I want to make some remarks about the incident which occurred in relation to the member for Chermside. The person involved in that offence was in possession of a firearm. I believe that offenders who are in possession of a firearm when they commit an offence should receive a mandatory five-year prison sentence simply because of the fact that they were in possession of a firearm at the time—whether the offence be shoplifting or speeding.

**Mr Bredhauer** interjected.

**Mr NELSON:** It is something that is actively pursued by many firearm lobbies around the world. The principle is that any person who commits an offence while in possession of a firearm should be harshly punished. In this way, the punishment would be taken away from the people who simply own firearms and put back on people who commit offences whilst in possession of firearms.

I have mentioned this previously in this House, but in the United States of America the NRA has called on the anti-gun lobby of the Democrat Party to punish people—I think they call it Project Exile—who commit offences while armed with a weapon. In this way, legitimate firearm owners would not be hindered in the possession of their firearms.

The person who attacked the office of the member for Chermshire was armed at the time. Had that person been suitably punished, the legitimate owners of firearms would not have come under any criticism. Most people who own firearms are law-abiding citizens and have no intention of committing crimes.

I reiterate that every member of Parliament should be allowed to go about his duties unhindered. That is a fundamental principle of our democracy. I agree with the comments made by the member for Clayfield. However, I think we should go further in the future and consider protecting members of Parliament in their dwelling houses and their electorate offices. Members who represent rural areas often work from home. I have been woken early in the morning by someone knocking at my door. I appear at the door, with a towel wrapped around me, to have someone say, "Hey, Shaun, can we look at doing this, that and the other?"

**Mr Mickel:** That would be good.

**Mr NELSON:** A horrible sight. I felt very sorry for him.

**Mr Mickel:** I bet he didn't come back.

**Mr NELSON:** He has come back.

**Mr Mickel:** You are embarrassing the Hansard lady.

**Mr NELSON:** Hopefully, she does not have to form a mental picture of that. It would be quite horrifying. People in my electorate know where I live; I have never made a secret of it. I live in a very small country town.

**Mr Mickel:** I am coming for a cup of coffee.

**Mr NELSON:** You are all welcome. If anyone is touring the tablelands, I invite them to drop in. The member for Warwick was in my electorate recently and I saw him at the races and we had a chat.

**Mr Lucas:** Another colourful racing identity.

**Mr NELSON:** He actually won. He put a bet on Rogan Josh.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Reeves):** Order! May I remind the honourable member to speak through the Chair. I would appreciate it if he would speak to the Bill.

**Mr NELSON:** I know that other members would be in the same situation, where they do conduct business from their homes. In some cases, people know where they live and will go to their houses for advice, to meet with them or to have discussions with them. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that members could be seeking protection at their homes, as well. I know that these issues are covered in the Criminal Code. But if special consideration was given to them under these clauses, that would further protect members in their ability to carry out their duties. I support the Bill in its entirety.

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