



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

Hansard 15 November 2000

WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—CCAQ) (9.58 p.m.): Tonight I rise to support the Bill introduced by the member for Thuringowa. Similar to the previous speakers, the member for Lockyer and the member for Tablelands, I could provide a lot of information to the House about responsible gun ownership. However, tonight I wish to put a human face on the issue of responsible and sensible gun ownership. Mr Alan Tedford is the new president of the Murrumba Pistol Club at Caboolture. He is a fine man and a fine shooter. I commend him for his support of the club, along with his wife, Dorothy. As I said, I wish to put a human face to our perception of a responsible shooter.

Alan previously served over 20 years in the armed services. He served a lot of that in the Army band. He is a man who is very talented. He plays quite a number of instruments: the trumpet, flute, piano, organ, saxophone, trombone, drums and tuba, just to name a few. He was actually instrumental in teaching my daughter, Danielle, to play the flute and the piccolo. He was one of the first instrumental music teachers who roamed the area up there in Caboolture and through the schools. He set up what is now the instrumental music program with Gary Sander, another fine musician from the area up there. Both of them were instrumental in forming the Caboolture community band. My daughter played in that band for a couple of years prior to her going to university.

The unfortunate thing about Alan is that about 10 years ago he suffered a very severe back injury. It hospitalised him and he spent quite a bit of time bed ridden in his home. I used to visit him there because he was quite a good friend of mine. Part of his rehabilitation was to try to get himself involved in a sport and try to get his mind working again on getting himself over the debilitating injury that he had suffered. He worked very hard at getting himself back on track and out of the house.

As part of that rehabilitation, at age 55 or 56 he took up the sport of shooting for the first time. It was something that he took to like a duck to water. He took this up basically to mentally challenge the disability that he had. He has since gone on to win State championships. I think he has been placed in Australian titles as well. He performs very, very well as a very ardent sporting shooter. Being a sporting shooter who has to travel, as previous members have pointed out, interstate and around the traps to various shoots, he has experienced difficulties associated with taking his firearms—and he has quite a number of them—to and from different States. It does create challenges for very ardent sporting shooters, as the member for Thuringowa has highlighted in his second-reading speech.

This Bill seeks to make this transportation of firearms just that little bit easier, to cut down on that bureaucratic nightmare that the shooters come across from State to State and at various police stations when they go to let people know their intention or where they are going. We just want to offer our support to the Sporting Shooters Association for, I suppose, highlighting the anomalies and that bureaucratic nightmare that they face on a day-to-day basis in trying to organise shoots and interstate competitions and in trying to have uniform provisions around Australia.

I can understand the Minister's dilemma. None of us here wants to hand over that type of national registration into the hands of the Commonwealth—not at all. I know that the Minister is very responsible with the portfolio and I know that he and the other Police Ministers do not want to hand that type of power over to the Commonwealth. However, I really believe that, with a lot of talk and a lot of dedicated looking at firearms legislation throughout the States, some sort of template legislation could be drafted that could fix up some of these anomalies and make things so much easier.

As the member for Lockyer said and as I said to him, it really needs to start somewhere. I suppose what we are trying to advocate is: let us start it here in Queensland, let us make the push from here, let us make it so that other States want to look on us with a bit of envy in the way we are trying to be responsible with the firearms legislation and be responsible to those people who have a very deep interest in that sport. After all, as I said, if it were not for this sport in which he has found an interest, I very much doubt whether Alan Tedford would be as mobile as he is today. I suppose had he not found that interest, he would probably still be bedridden in his home. He may even be in a wheelchair today. It is that international or interstate competition that spurs people on to achieve in any sport. I just want to put on record that that we should recognise shooting as one of those very legitimate sports in this country.

Dr Prenzler: It is part of the Olympic Games.

Mr FELDMAN: Yes, as the member for Lockyer said, it is a sport in the Olympic Games. Early on, I noted the trouble experienced by sporting shooters as to the legality of having in their possession a particular category of firearm for their sport. It was one of those things that we really should highlight.

These amendments to the Weapons Act—the amending of section 33—are responsible. They are legitimate. They are not being trendy, but they aim to be responsible to those who have firearms and who want to go about their sport legitimately. I know that the member for Thuringowa has pointed out previously that a lot of these sportsmen are members of the armed services or the Police Service. Policemen face these problems when they travel interstate to shoot. Introducing amendments that make it so much easier to cut a swath through that bureaucratic nightmare only bodes well for the sport and for us as a State.

I commend the member for Thuringowa for highlighting this as a problem and for trying to do something about it. I just want to commend the member and commend the Bill to the House.
