



Speech by

Mr W. BAUMANN

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard 13 April 2000

TOW TRUCK OPERATORS

Mr BAUMANN (Albert—NPA) (7.26 p.m.): The New South Wales Government has recently introduced a regulation under section 69(2) of the Tow Truck Regulations which requires that any tow truck picking up a vehicle in New South Wales must be operator accredited and licensed in New South Wales, as must any associated staff. What this legislation means, in effect, is that a tow truck operator who is properly licensed and accredited in Queensland is not able to pick up a vehicle in New South Wales and return to Queensland. Queensland has some of the most respected and experienced operators in the nation in this heavy vehicle recovery industry. All members of the House would be aware of Barnes Auto and Knights Heavy Towing operated by Rodney Hill. Companies like these have contracts with major transport companies to recover broken down or wrecked vehicles from all over the country and to repatriate them to Queensland workshops for expert repair.

What the New South Wales Labor Government is trying to do is put an end to reciprocal recognition and to free trade between the States. It would be similar to Queensland introducing a regulation that required a New South Wales registered truck operator picking up a load of potatoes from the Rocklea markets for transport back to Sydney to be registered in Queensland. This is an extremely dangerous precedent that could lead to tit-for-tat action between the States and could escalate to border wars similar to the pre-Federation days.

Consider this scenario: a Queensland operator breaks down while returning from New South Wales, rings a Queensland tow truck operator such as Rodney Hill, has a prime mover towed down there to replace the one that has broken down, but Mr Hill is not able to pick up the broken down vehicle and tow it back to Queensland. This is clearly an unsustainable proposition. I call upon Carl Scully, the New South Wales Minister for Transport, to urgently review this provision before it brings about unintended consequences for his State.

I also ask our Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Mr Steve Bredhauer, to take urgent action to communicate the concerns of Queensland operators to his counterpart and to examine this matter with a view to possible legal action to protect the interests of Queensland-based operators.
