



Speech by

Hon. D. HAMILL

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 19 October 2000

DIESEL FUEL REBATE SCHEME

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—ALP) (Treasurer) (6.15 p.m.): In a debate in which humbuggery and fraud seem overflowing from the presentations made by honourable members opposite, I move the following amendment—

"Delete all words after 'that' and replace with 'the Liberals and Nationals end their opposition to the extension of the Commonwealth diesel fuel rebate scheme to all off-road diesel users, including civil contractors, so they can achieve Commonwealth benefits denied them by the joint opposition of the Liberals, Nationals and Australian Democrats.'"

The facts speak for themselves. If one looked at the motion that has been moved by the member for Gregory and seconded by the member for Warwick, one would be led to believe that there was a vote taken in the Senate and that the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Democrats defeated Government legislation relating to the diesel rebate scheme. I table for the information of all honourable members of the House the record of the Senate of 29 June 1999, which shows that the Government legislation was passed. The Bill was read a third time, Government amendments had been passed, but the Opposition did not oppose the legislation.

The legislation that is being attacked in this Chamber tonight is the legislation of the Howard Federal Government, the Liberal/National Party Government in Canberra. These are the people who have put in place the diesel rebate scheme in line with the Prime Minister's press release. You see, the legislation that was passed in the Federal Parliament gave effect to the press release of none other than the Prime Minister, John Howard, issued on 31 May 1999 in which he proudly proclaimed all the aspects of his tax package.

Let me quote the relevant portion in relation to off-road diesel and like fuels. The press release states—

"The extension to the off-road concession for diesel and like fuels will be limited to providing full credits for marine use, bush nursing homes, hospitals, nursing homes, aged persons homes and private residences, but not for construction, power generation, manufacturing or forestry. The proposed full credit for mining currently accessing the DRFS will be maintained."

They are not my words. They are the words of the Prime Minister. They are the words of the Federal Government. They are the words of the very Prime Minister whose Government sponsored the legislation that all parties supported in the Senate. Why? Because the Labor Opposition believed that the Government should be hanged by its own legislation!

Nevertheless, this Government has not accepted the Federal Government's approach to off-road diesel. All members will recall that I have repeatedly written to Federal Treasurer Costello seeking the inclusion of civil contractors in the off-road diesel scheme. But what has happened? Nothing has happened. The silence from Canberra is deafening. Why is it deafening? Because what I am calling for is for civil contractors and others who benefited under the State's off-road diesel scheme to be included under the Federal Government's off-road diesel scheme. Why is there no answer? Because I want the Federal Government to reform its scheme and it simply is not interested! It is thumbing its nose at the

civil contractors and thumbing its nose at all of those who were excluded from the off-road diesel scheme when the Federal Government took over that scheme on 1 July.

But here is the other point: the Federal Government took \$175m off Queensland to take up the off-road diesel scheme. It has not included the civil contractors and others have been left out, but it still took the money. I ask all honourable members to think about this. The Federal Government took the money. Why isn't the Federal Government using the money that it took from us to subsidise or support all those who previously benefited under the State scheme?

Those opposite cannot have it both ways. Their mob put the legislation through the Federal Parliament to deny these groups the off-road diesel subsidy. We did not oppose their coalition colleagues. We call on them to change the scheme. I am sure we will receive support in the Senate. However, the Federal Government will not do it. Why won't it do it? Because it is pocketing the money and crucifying the industry.

Time expired.
