



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 21 June 2000

EQUITY AND FAIR TRADING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (5.07 p.m.): The coalition supports the Equity and Fair Trading (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. It is a small piece of legislation but, nevertheless, a very important one. It amends some 10 Acts of the Parliament. It has a Schedule attached to it which also contains some very minor amendments. As I say, although the legislation is not of great moment itself, it nevertheless touches on some very important issues. I will come to one of those issues in a moment.

First of all, I notice that the legislation amends the Auctioneers and Agents Act in relation to people living across the border. It rectifies a matter that was going to be changed had there been a rewrite of the auctioneers and agents legislation. There are some other changes in the legislation which would have been picked up in the rewrite.

There are some amendments in relation to the Returned Services League of Australia. Those amendments relate to property matters. I know that this is a matter to which the RSL is looking forward. The legislation will ensure that longstanding arrangements with regard to property will not be affected by the process of incorporation.

One matter to which I particularly wish to refer relates to the National Institute of Accountants. The legislation contains several amendments in this regard. I will simply refer to one of the amendments because, basically, they are all very similar.

The Gaming Machine Act was amended some time ago, either in late 1998 or early 1999. The amendments in that legislation relating to the National Institute of Accountants are slightly different from those contained in the current legislation. This Bill adds the words "of at least three years' duration" in relation to the tertiary course of study. I am not sure of the reason for that. The Minister might be able to give the House an answer to that question and thus enable us to go through the clauses a little more quickly. Perhaps the Minister can tell us why the provision is different in this legislation from what it was in the Gaming Machine Act. It is possible that we could end up with two different classes of NIA people, namely one group that can audit gaming machine licensees and another that can audit the bulk of the equity and fair trading legislation. There is a difference. I think it is important that we have the same wording in both pieces of legislation, otherwise it can become confusing.

Approximately 13,000 accountants are members of the NIA and approximately 1,200 of those accountants live in Queensland. They should be covered by this legislation. Statutory recognition of the National Institute of Accountants has been given in Commonwealth legislation and legislation in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and Western Australia. In 1998, I introduced a miscellaneous Bill into this House which gave that recognition, but I am sure that it did not contain the duration of three years. The change to the gaming machine legislation that was introduced by this Government mirrored exactly what was in the legislation that I introduced into this place in 1998.

The NIA has members located throughout Queensland and they play a very significant role, particularly in rural areas. In the past, problems have been experienced because those accountants have not been able to undertake audits in the same way as accountants who are members of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants or the Institute of Chartered Accountants have been able to undertake audits. That has meant that accountants who are members of the NIA have

had to obtain special permission from the chief executive officer. That has been a bugbear because it has created a lot of paperwork. I understand that, through this legislation, those accountants automatically qualify and do not have to go through that laborious process. That has been sought for a long time. I am just disappointed that it has taken a couple of years for it to happen.

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister said something about clumps of Bills. When I was the Minister, I was always wheeling them into this place. It is unfortunate that a Bill relating to this matter was not passed before the Parliament was dissolved.

However, I want to clarify one issue. I understand that there can be two different types of NIA accountants. There must be some reason for that. I look forward to that issue being clarified. Otherwise, we could end up with problems with that institute that we do not have currently.
