



Speech by

CARRYN SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Hansard 7 November 2001

AMENDMENTS TO BILLS

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): I rise tonight in support of the Premier's amendment to the member for Nicklin's notice of motion. All members of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee believe, as I do, that it is in everyone's interest to make this committee run as efficiently and effectively as possible. I firmly agree that the amendment will help achieve this. I am pleased the Premier chose to move the amendment, as it shows his genuine commitment to the democratic process of parliament and that he is at ease with listening to the viewpoints of all sides of this House. I continue to have the pleasure of working with the member for Nicklin on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee along with the other members, most of whom have contributed to the debate this evening. I know he is genuine in his attempt to make it work as well as it can.

Mr Lucas: Your husband was a great member of the committee as well.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: Yes, my husband was. However, it is difficult to either compare our system of government with that of the federal government or practise its methods because we lack a bicameral system. As the Premier pointed out, this system of government at the federal level means that amendments made during the debate on the clauses in the House of Representatives are quite often able to be considered by the scrutiny committee prior to their debate in the Senate. It has the resources. We neither have the power nor the resources of the Senate. However, as was pointed out, even though the Queensland government operates as a unicameral parliament, it does not prevent us as politicians from considering the relevance of the Senate's practices.

I have some concerns that the notice of motion put forward will hold up debate on bills that pose amendments. We are all conscious of everyone's work commitments and it is difficult to ask others to add any extra on top of their existing workloads. Any delays will require more resources which could be better spent on the preparation of the bills to come before this parliament to be fully debated. I am well aware of the need for openness and accountability in any government. Parliamentary committees are made up of government and non-government members and each member has the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns when the bills are presented at the meetings. This has been very effective to date.

Currently, the provisions that govern the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee do not allow it to consider amendments. However, we may determine to ask relevant questions of the minister and receive written replies, and this has been sufficient in the past. As the member for Gladstone pointed out, amendments have not been thrust upon us very often in this chamber and, when they have, members have still had ample opportunity to ask as many questions as they wish. The amendment as outlined by the Premier purports to clarify that there should be minimal delay to debate on amendments while bills are being debated in committee. The amendment, which I support, seeks to confer a new function on the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and is a practical solution to achieve the motion outlined by the member for Nicklin this evening.
