



Speech by

JOHN MICKEL, ^{MLA}
STATE MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Hansard 6 December 2001

WEAPONS AMENDMENT REGULATION [No. 1] 2001

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (3.35 p.m.): The speech that we just heard was a piece of irrelevancy. That debate was settled when the Prime Minister decided to bring in national gun laws. The speech that we just heard was recycled nonsense. The member for Callide said that the legislation brought in by the Prime Minister was introduced at a moment of high emotion and hysteria.

Mr Seeney: Dead right!

Mr MICKEL: That is dead right. What evoked that high emotion and hysteria? The deaths of 35 people and injuries to 18 others. If that does not provoke in anybody a sense of high emotion and hysteria, I do not know what should.

Unlike the previous speaker, I have had relatives who have been the victims of a gun battle. This one happened outside the Moorvale shopping centre. Before we just dismiss out of hand those injured people, let me tell honourable members what happened in the case of just one person injured at Moorvale. An innocent person walking past was hit in the spinal cord by a deflected bullet and she will never walk again. I do not know how many of the 18 people—the people supposedly with a sense of high emotion and hysteria—will never walk again, but I do know this: their lives have been changed irrevocably. Let us not revisit that debate. What we are speaking about today is whether the licence fee should increase.

We also heard that the licences have an expiry date. Yes, they do; the expiry date was introduced by Russell Cooper. If members opposite want to blaggard Russell Cooper, good on them. However, it was the National Party which brought that in. The provision for an expiry date brings it into line with nothing other than a photographic driver's licence—no doubt equally as comforting as mine. We have to get a licence for that.

Why will there be an increase? It is because we need to make sure that the administrative staff necessary are in place to prevent a backlog. I recognise that there are law-abiding gun owners—the people who belong to sporting clubs and the farmers, to whom the member for Nanango alluded. There is nothing wrong with any of those people having a gun.

Mr Schwarten: My good self.

Mr MICKEL: Yes. But the department needs staff to carry out the administrative work, otherwise there will be an enormous backlog—27 staff to meet those additional demands for relicensing. The bulk of the renewals will be conducted over a three-year period. There is a requirement for follow-up work and the checking of firearm registrations. This is about providing administrative staff.

In politics we must always talk about the alternatives. We have never heard from the other side what the alternative is. This measure will raise \$3 million for the year 2002. It is up to the opposition—

Mr Seeney: To employ 27 people.

Mr MICKEL: My friend, I am sure you were sent here to be a warning to us rather than an example. What is the opposition's alternative? If we do not use the 27, who will we use? They will have to use operational police. There is no doubt about that. Operational police have to be employed doing administrative work. This issue today shows the Leader of the Opposition's absence of leadership. It was not so long ago that the leader complained about the administrative work that police officers have

to do. The leader complained about it, yet today he seeks to add to the administrative work of operational police. If one does not do that, where does one get the money from? This was the challenge we put to the leader in the budget. It is all very well to oppose the revenue increases, but each and every one of the opposition's shadow spokesmen spoke not about less government expenditure but more. How does one fund more government expenditure with less taxation? There is only model example for that: Brazil. The members opposite are the Boys from Brazil. That is their policy option for Queensland.

A number of independent members will contribute to this debate. Have we never heard from the member for Gladstone about the need for more police in Gladstone? It was not so long ago that the member for Darling Downs, who entertains us from time to time, quite rightly argued the need for a PLO in Oakey.

Mr Hopper: Two!

Mr MICKEL: Two PLOs in Oakey. How does the member intend to fund those if administrative staff are obliterated and taken over by operational police? One cannot do it. When the member returns to Oakey, he can explain that he passed away that opportunity because he did not want the revenue. That is the logical consequence of knocking back revenue-raising measures. There are no ifs or buts about it. Under the member for Toowoomba South, the opposition looks more like an outfit auditioning for *Sesame Street* than a party trying to become the alternative government in Queensland.

Ten months after the election the opposition has left us with a policy-free zone. The opposition does not have an alternative to the measure today. It always grieves me that we have to increase taxation revenue to fund services, but that is the logical consequence of wanting more services, of wanting what members opposite demand of the government daily. Be honest about it: how else can we fund these measures if today we excise from the budget \$3 million?

The Independents never come up with an answer for that, because they will never form a government. So, they are excluded from this and allowed to be irresponsible. It is one of the great things about being an Independent. It is a different test when one is the opposition seeking to form a government. The opposition today is bereft, exposed for what it is. I am selfish about this matter, because I want more operational police in Logan. I will not be a hypocrite about this. I absolutely demand more police in Logan. There is not a shadow of a doubt about that. I definitely want more police for the police beat of Marsden and Crestmead, because that is one area which has been overlooked and which needs a police presence. I will not stand here and be a hypocrite by saying that I do not want the minister to fund this increase but I want him to fund extra police.

I also heard from my friend, the member for Callide, about the police revenue raising, about their being blaggarded for manning speed guns.

Mr Seeney: Absolutely.

Mr MICKEL: Let me tell you this my friend—there is no revenue to be raised, not a cent, if people obey the law. The member wants to stand by the lawbreakers adding to the road toll, because a lot of the road toll is caused by excessive speed. Members opposite are not those who in uniform knock on the door of the troubled families and say, 'Your loved one has died on the roads.' All we hear today is the blaggarding of the administrative staff and the police service, a blaggarding by the opposition police spokesman who says the only role for police is to revenue raise—not to save lives or to protect the citizenry going about their lawful business. Next members opposite will say that police should not put radar traps at the bottom of hills. What about the folks who live at the bottom of hills and expect to leave their premises without somebody running into them? These are the issues that members opposite must understand.
