



Speech by

Hon. KEN HAYWARD

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

Hansard 17 October 2001

ELECTORAL [TRAVELLERS' ADVANCE VOTES] AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (9.43 p.m.): Tonight I take the opportunity—and I have spoken to the member for Nicklin about this—to speak against this private member's bill. I have spoken to him about this, because I hope he does not take offence to my views with regard to this bill. In simple terms, I think this bill is rubbish. However, I make it clear that I have great regard for the member and his commitment to this parliament and his constituency. However, he proposes a new advance vote, as he calls it. It is an advance vote, which I am sure other honourable members have spoken about today, which is cast in the belief that one has no knowledge of who the candidates are for the election. I think very clearly—I am in a position where I can say this fairly—it advantages candidates from the major parties against people who might be proposing to run as Independents.

Mr Terry Sullivan: And incumbents.

Mr HAYWARD: I think it is extremely advantageous for incumbents. In his second reading speech, the member stated that in general terms this came into his mind because the problem was brought to his attention when people who he said might be his supporters saw him and decided that they might want to cast a vote for him if there was an election coming up.

He also proposes in his bill that we could even write our own candidate on the ballot paper. Again, I find that a very odd process. I think the strongest argument that the member for Nicklin advances is that basically his idea for the Electoral (Travellers' Advance Votes) Amendment Bill 2001 was that the people who came to see him—those six people—wanted to vote for him and they said that they did not know whether or not the election was on, that they did not know where they would be and that they would be travelling around. What I find hard to understand about this is that, wherever they were going, surely there would be a telephone. Surely there would be some way of communicating. Surely they would be able to ring one of their family members or the member for whom they wanted to cast the vote or whatever they wanted to do to find out about that.

As the member for Kallangur in the state parliament, I recall that people I knew very well travelled to the UK before an election was called. When the election was called, I found out through their daughter where they were so as to make sure that they would cast a vote. It is not that hard to do. We are living in a modern world. I think the system that exists now is a strong one; there is a detailed list of who the candidates are and when writs have been issued and nominations have closed.

The member proposes in his bill a notion that the vote that we cast should have some kind of validity for a period of six months in the hope that an election occurs some time during that six-month period. I see the member for Nicklin writing vigorously. No doubt he is going to respond to some of these assertions.

In his second reading speech the member advances the proposition of a proxy vote and rejects it. I think the reason he chose to reject it was that circumstances might change and he is not sure how the proxy which he assigned might vote, given that changes may occur. But he is willing to put forward the proposition—as I said, I think a silly proposition; a proposition which is rubbish—that we have a notion of advance votes before candidates occur and also, strangely enough, before the circumstances might change. Circumstances do change during the period of an election. Again, I think this type of bill, should it get up, would provide a tremendous advantage for a sitting member.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! The level of audible conversation is unacceptable. I would like to hear this very interesting debate.

Mr HAYWARD: All of us have some kind of self-interest in ensuring that people are going to vote for us. As the member said in his speech—and he did not hide from this—he considered these people's votes to be votes for him.

As I said before, we live in a modern world. The telephone is available. People can ring the member, one of their family members, a friend or whomever to inquire as to what is going on in the state of Queensland. Things are not secret. There are newspapers and all sorts of modes of contact available, particularly if people are concerned enough to find out what is happening. If they ring the local member of parliament in particular, given that they are friendly or they have some knowledge of that person, he or she will soon tell them where things are at.

As I said before, I have personal experience on this issue. I made it my business to find out through my constituents' family—through their daughter—where these people were. I made it my business to find out where they were staying and I then advised them to go to Queensland House in London and ensure that they cast a vote. How they cast their vote I will never know. But if I took that much determination to try to find out, then I would hope that they voted for me as the Labor member in the seat of Kallangur.

I certainly reject this bill. As I said before, I think this bill is ill conceived. I certainly oppose this bill.
