



Speech by

Mr R. QUINN

MEMBER FOR ROBINA

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TRADING [ALLOWABLE HOURS] AMENDMENT BILL

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (8.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill because it is what the Liberal Party has been advocating for since last year. We took the view last year that the Industrial Relations Commission of Queensland ought not be the body that decides trading hours in Queensland. On that basis we put forward our idea that Sunday trading should be allowed within the greater Brisbane metropolitan area. We did that simply because we believed that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission was ill equipped to handle that sort of decision. That belief has proved to be correct. In fact, the decision that was handed down had to be amended by the Premier and legislation introduced to make sure that some of the ill effects of that decision were not set in concrete. We took the view that governments, irrespective of political flavour, had the responsibility to legislate for trading hours in this state. That was because the consumers themselves should be at the centre of that decision making.

There is no doubt in my mind that overwhelmingly consumers in the greater Brisbane area want to shop on Sundays. Any survey that people would like to conduct on this issue would provide them with that answer. But not only has that answer been provided recently; in fact, it was provided some 10 to 20 years ago. Members might remember that during the Bjelke-Petersen era there was a trial of 24-hour, seven days a week shopping. At that time the consumer sentiment was totally in favour of deregulated shopping hours. The minister at that time was none other than Vince Lester. Let me remind members of the minister's words at that stage. He said—

Small business and other business groups who oppose any extension of trading hours may just have to look at reality—the weight of public opinion is clearly in favour of being able to shop at weekends.

If that was the weight of public opinion then, it has got even weightier today. With interstate migration and people being able to move around the world and shop whenever they like in other parts of the world and other parts of Australia, more and more Queensland is being seen as out of step with the rest of the world. That is why we said it ought to be a function of this House to legislate for shopping hours, whatever they might be. That brings us to the present time, when we have a bill before the House as a result of an Industrial Relations Commission's decision.

But not only is there a set of double standards on behalf of the National Party; there is also a set of double standards on behalf of the Labor Party. Here we have the Premier saying, 'We have full confidence in the Industrial Relations Commission's decision.' It handed down a decision, and what did he do? He said, 'That is not good enough. It is a mess. I am going to legislate.' That is the hypocrisy of this man. He expresses confidence one minute, then he gets the umpire's decision and says, 'I don't agree with the decision. I am going to change it.' But then he says, 'With any other subsequent application I will abide by the umpire's decision again.' What happens if the commission does not get it right again? He will be back here. Talk about hypocrisy! He has double standards on double standards. That is his position. There is not a consistent line anywhere in his argument. One day he says that he has faith in the Industrial Relations Commission, then the next day he says, 'We have no faith in the commission and we are going to legislate.' For goodness' sake, he should let everyone know what the principle is on which he bases his policy. It is either one or the other. It is not a combination to suit the circumstances. He has a very malleable policy—one that can be bent and twisted to serve his own political agenda. It is no wonder that no-one knows what is going on in this state. We have a government that twists and turns and—

Mr Nuttall: Not at all.

Mr QUINN: Yes, we have. The government has one policy one day and another policy the next day. It has double standards all the way.

At the end of the day, what we are on about here is putting in place a set of trading hours that suits modern Queensland and suits the lifestyle of families throughout the greater Brisbane metropolitan area. We have to take into account that for many families the days of a husband and wife with two kids working nine to five from Monday to Friday have gone. More and more these days people are working shifts. They come from single parent, single income families, and they want the added convenience of being able to shop on Sundays. That is what this legislation is all about. It is all about bringing Queensland into the modern era and giving families a choice as to when they can shop, a choice of lifestyle, and a choice in terms of the way in which they manage the balance between work and home duties. The more we can do that, and the more we can allow our families those sorts of choices, the more we will make sure that families can work and thrive. By restricting their choices we will place added pressures on families, and we ought not be about that. We ought to be about managing shopping hours so that people have a range of choices to suit the lifestyles that they wish to pursue. That is what this bill is about. That is why I support the bill.
