



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard 14 May 2003

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE AMENDMENT REGULATION [No. 1] 2003

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.29 p.m.): I rise to support the motion of the member for Robina to disallow the Motor Accident Insurance Amendment Regulation No. 1 2003 (Subordinate Legislation No. 49 of 2003) tabled in the parliament on 1 April. I think the arguments made by the member for Robina and other speakers on this side of the House fully support the disallowance of this regulation. Although I do not wish to labour the point, I will reinforce some of the arguments in the face of the lack of logic shown by members opposite in their attempted rebuttal of this disallowance motion.

The regulation proposes to increase the hospital and emergency services levy from \$7.85 to \$8.20. As a number of members have said, the actual amount of money is not very large. But this is not about the amount of money contained in the regulation. No-one has suggested that. No-one has suggested that it is about the amount of money. It is about a principle. It is about whether it is fair and just for this levy to be increased given that the subject of another bill before the House has caused considerable angst in the community. I will not debate the elements contained within the other bill before the House.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr SEENEY: I am sure I will not. I am sure that is why this disallowance motion is in the House today. I am sure that not even the Treasurer would deny that it is a deliberate strategy to have this disallowance motion in the House today to prevent me from doing just that—to prevent me from encompassing within my contribution to this debate the full effect of the impact of those levies included in that other piece of legislation that we are not allowed to discuss. This is a deliberate strategy by the government to ensure that the debate on this disallowance motion is a lot narrower than it otherwise would have been, due to the constraints on speakers in favour of this disallowance motion.

This is about the principle of whether this regulation needs to be increased or even whether it is fair at all, given those other factors that we will get a chance to debate later. It is not about the amount of money. The member for Kurwongbah took a long time to talk about the small amounts of money that were involved and, in so doing, completely ignored the whole thrust of the disallowance motion and the angst and frustration being felt by people in the general community over the unfairness and injustice of increasing the amount they are required to pay under this regulation at a time when they are facing the other factors encompassed by that other piece of legislation.

As the opposition we take this opportunity to move these disallowance motions in the House to give the minister responsible a chance to be accountable to the people of Queensland and to justify why these charges are necessary. Why is it necessary to increase this charge? Why is it necessary to have this levy at all given the other developments that are almost certain to occur and the injustices that are part and parcel of that and that will be well covered in the debate on the legislation that will ensure those levies will be paid a number of times by the people involved? This represents another example of double dipping. The very same arguments apply here in that the government is taking another opportunity to get its hands into people's pockets. The amount of money is not important. It is the fact that this is just another opportunity for the Treasurer to get his grubby little fingers into the pockets of Queenslanders. This is symptomatic of what has been happening right across a whole range of departments.

A number of speakers on this side of the House have pointed out previously that it appears a directive has gone out from the Treasurer and Treasury to every government department and every minister to look for every opportunity across their spheres of administration to increase the amount of money they can raise on behalf of the government. In so doing, they attempt to hide the increased income that that will produce. There seems to be a philosophy that a lot of little thefts, or a lot of little increases, will not be felt quite as much as if the Treasurer was to introduce a single new and more clearly identifiable charge or tax to cover his obvious budgetary problems. As has been said many times in this House over the past couple of weeks, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the government is broke. We will see just how broke it is in the next couple of weeks when the budget is brought down on 2 June. This is a disallowance motion—

Mr Cummins: Your coalition mate got a \$23,000 pay rise.

Mr SEENEY: The member needs to look at the full details of that and not get carried away by the claims of the Premier's spin doctors. Even the member is not so stupid as to believe the spin put on that.

Mr Cummins interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Just for once in his life the member for Kawana should take the opportunity to not believe everything the Premier says. He can suck up to the Premier as much as he likes when he is around. But for once in your life—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole): Order! The member will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr SEENEY: The member should look at what existed previously and prove himself capable of independent thought for once in his life. I think the people who sent the member for Kawana here expect more from him than his continual sucking up to the Premier and his belief in everything he says. The member for Kawana will find out that nobody accepts—

Mr Cummins interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kawana!

Mr SEENEY: I think the case that has been made for the disallowance of this regulation is one that this parliament should accept. This regulation should be disallowed by the parliament.