



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard 7 October 2003

RECORDING OF EVIDENCE AMENDMENT REGULATION [No.1] 2003

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.44 p.m.): I rise to second the disallowance motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and member for Southern Downs. This is another in a line of disallowance motions that the opposition has moved, as we should, against regulations that seek to increase fees unjustly and unjustifiably.

There has been a line of these regulations. I am sure that members in this parliament can remember at least some of them. There were the penalty payments for late registration whereby if people were a day late they were hit with a substantial increase in the payment that was due. There was the \$50 per licence tax on water licences. There was the \$3 a megalitre tax on water used from water users' own infrastructure. A long list of regulations that have come before this parliament are simply designed to raise money for a government that is undeniably broke.

I was interested to hear the interjections from some of the more inconsequential members of the government back bench when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking to this disallowance motion, comparing the record of this government with the record of the previous Borbidge-led coalition government. There is one area in which every member of this parliament should make that comparison every day; that is, in the area of financial management. Before any member of the government back bench makes a fool of themselves in this place with inane interjections about the record of the Borbidge government, they should repeat to themselves, 'Three deficits in a row.' That is the legacy of this government, and that is the very reason we are debating this regulation tonight.

It is because of that failing in economic management, which has led to three deficits in a row, that this parliament has been asked to approve a string of regulations that are aimed simply at raising money. This is the latest in a line of regulations aimed at raising money to fill that black hole caused by the government's economic mismanagement, which is represented by those three deficits in a row.

I note that the members for Toowoomba North and Southport, who were both vocal in their comparisons of this government with the Borbidge government, have no contributions to make with regard to the comparison between the economic management of those two governments and the financial results those two governments were able to produce for the people of Queensland.

This is a government that must be ashamed of its record of economic management. It must be ashamed of the financial result it has produced for the people of Queensland. It is that financial result that it seeks to rectify by the introduction of the types of regulations we are debating tonight.

There has been a 70 per cent increase in a government fee. It does not really matter what that fee is. It does not matter what the fee is for. This is about the fact that a minister should seek this parliament's approval for a regulation relating to 70 per cent increase with no justification and no extra service for the people who will have to pay that fee. The minister simply seeks a 70 per cent increase in that fee because the government is broke. That is the only justification that can be put forward for this regulation brought before the House tonight.

Nobody is prepared to come into this House and try to justify a 70 per cent increase in the fee to provide a better service to the people of Queensland. They will not do it tonight, just as they did not do it in relation to any of the other disallowance motions we have moved on any of the other regulations that were designed to increase the take the government was able to get from the particular fee that was involved.

In all of those other debates we have had about regulations that should have been disallowed, if members opposite thought about what was being proposed they would have come into this House and tried to give the people of Queensland a reasonable and logical explanation as to why those fees needed to be increased by 70, 80, 100 or 120 per cent. Nobody chose to do that. They come in here and rely on the fact that they have 66 seats and they can force through this House regulations that will recover more money for them to try to cover up the fiscal mismanagement and the financial shame that will be a legacy of this Beattie Labor government for years to come.

This regulation should be disallowed, just as those other regulations should have been disallowed. It should be disallowed if for no other reason than that nobody is prepared to make a cogent argument in this place as to why it should be allowed. Nobody will come into this parliament tonight and make a reasonable, logical argument about why the fees should be introduced.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The member for Toowoomba North doubts that. I did not see the member for Toowoomba North making such an argument when the other regulations were debated in this House. I did not see the member for Southport making such an argument when the other regulations were introduced into this House. I will be interested to hear tonight how those two members who like to sit and interject with inane, stupid comments and inane, stupid comparisons will go about justifying a 70 per cent increase on the services available to the people who will have to pay that increase.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The Minister for State Development looks a lot more comfortable where he is sitting now than where he usually sits.

Mr Barton: This used to be my seat when I was a backbencher.

Mr SEENEY: You are better suited to it, too, old mate. You should go back and sit there; you look a bit better.

Mr Barton: At least you do not look so ugly from back here.

Mr Springborg: But you do.

Mr SEENEY: I will tell you what: you do not look any better back there than you do over here.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! I might be citing relevance soon.

Mr SEENEY: I feel obliged to respond to the Minister for State Development, his interjections being witty and insightful as they always are.

This regulation should be disallowed. We will continue to move these disallowance motions every time one of these regulations comes before the parliament. I have no doubt that there will be a long list of them, because the government will continue on this course of trying to squeeze every dollar it can out of this source of revenue. It will try to maintain the facade that it will not increase the taxes that it imposes on Queensland taxpayers. It is misleading and bordering on fraudulent for this government to maintain the argument that it has not increased taxes and charges in this state over and above the CPI.

How on earth can that argument be maintained? How on earth can anybody with any credibility stand in any public forum let alone this parliament and make that claim when regulations such as this come before the House which seek to increase this particular fee by 70 per cent? We have had many others come before this House that have sought to increase fees by 100 to 120 per cent. Until those proposals are accompanied by a reasonable justification to the people of Queensland, they should be disallowed and we in the opposition will continue to move motions for their disallowance. I commend the motion that has been moved by the member for Southern Downs, the Leader of the Opposition, to disallow this regulation, and I urge every member of the House to support it.