




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2020

CRIME AND CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL

Order Discharged and Withdrawal

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.07 pm): I cannot let this opportunity pass without speaking to this motion. I have been sitting in the chamber all week waiting for the Leader of the House to come in here and say those few little words—that is, they are getting rid of item No. 6 on the *Notice Paper*.

An opposition member: What is No. 6?

Mr BLEIJIE: Item No. 6 on the *Notice Paper* is, of course, the journalists' gag laws with respect to the CCC. Over the years we have seen many Labor ministers investigated by the Crime and Corruption Commission. Just as we have seen the Labor government try to nobble this parliament, we have seen them try to silence the CCC in terms of its investigations. Members will recall that at the last sitting the Attorney-General raced in here and made an impassioned plea in an impassioned speech to pass this law. She told us how important these laws are for the people of Queensland. I hear her laughing, but the Attorney-General did that. She made a great introductory speech on how important it was.

Mrs D'Ath: Thank you.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will give her that. It was well drafted by the department officials. It had gone through cabinet on Monday. The Premier had signed off on the CCC gag laws. The Attorney-General introduced the bill to the House. She told all of us in this place and the journalists how important this law was. She made it an urgent bill. She declared it urgent so that it could be rushed through the committee process. She introduced the bill on the Thursday and said how important it was. On the Friday the Attorney-General put out a statement saying that it was not now a government priority and that they would be withdrawing it.

An opposition member: Oops!

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection: oops! The law was so important on Thursday that it was declared urgent. It had gone through cabinet and through every ministerial department for advice. The Attorney-General presented it to cabinet on the Monday and on the Thursday introduced it and declared it urgent. We opposed the declaration of urgency in this place. We said that these laws went too far. Then the nightly news rightfully smashed the government. Then on Friday, I think at 10.30 in the morning, before the cup of tea, the press release came out that they were abandoning those laws that were so important on Thursday.

The Premier was asked about it at a press conference. The Premier, like she always does, first made out that she did not know what the journalist was talking about—that might be true, actually—but then said, 'No, no, it is not a priority of the government.' Less than 24 hours earlier it was the biggest priority of the government, hence they declared it urgent. They were going to ram it through the committee process and then debate the bill.

I have been sitting here all week. I have been telling my colleagues all week. I have not left this chamber, waiting for the Attorney to come in here and utter these words. I saw the Attorney's face when I walked in earlier. I could see her think, 'Oh, darn, he's arrived!' just before she moved the motion. What a week! What a week in state parliament!

Mr Minnikin: What a day!

Mr BLEIJIE: What a day in state parliament! What a last week we have had in state parliament. The government: so sensitive to integrity, transparency and accountability; so sensitive to the issues of the member for South Brisbane and the CCC investigations; so sensitive to the CCC and Minister Bailey's interrogation by the CCC in the first term of the government with the fake email addresses; so sensitive to the Crime and Corruption Commission that it was going to tell journalists in the fourth estate, 'You are not to publish details of these investigations'—

Mrs D'ATH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are now starting to debate the bill, not the motion before the parliament. I ask that the member be brought back to the motion.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): I will take some advice.

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Deputy Speaker, on the point of order raised by the Attorney-General, the motion is suspending item 6 from the *Notice Paper* and I am putting the case as to why it is being suspended from the *Notice Paper*. I am speaking to the merits or otherwise of it being on the *Notice Paper*.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I will ask you to be cautious in keeping within the motion, thank you.

Mr BLEIJIE: It will come as no surprise that we will support the government on this motion to delete item 6 from the *Notice Paper*, the Crime and Corruption Amendment Bill. That bill seeks put gag clauses on journalists. In fact, it threatens to throw journalists in jail for reporting news, so much do they wanted a cover-up for ministers being before the CCC. The reason I know a lot about this is that while in government we conducted a review of the Crime and Corruption Commission, or the CMC as it was then. The LNP decided not to proceed with these provisions because it would be an attack on the democratic right of journalism in this state. That is why we did not proceed with it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I will bring you back to the motion.

Mr BLEIJIE: We will support the Attorney-General in this great motion. Item 6 on the *Notice Paper* should never have been on the *Notice Paper*. It should never have had urgency attached to it. I encourage all honourable members to get rid of not only item 6 on the *Notice Paper* but also this terrible Labor government on 31 October.