

**PLANNING APPEALS AMENDMENT BILL 2001**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 28 August.

**HON DERRICK TOMLINSON** (East Metropolitan) [3.39 pm]: I rise to present the Opposition's support for this Bill. I confess I am a little nonplussed. We have actually dealt with some of the Government's business, and the Minister for Racing and Gaming promised me that we would not get to the Liquor Licensing Amendment Bill until 4.45 this afternoon.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: It is the only promise I have broken.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: To my knowledge it is the only promise the minister has made. It is certainly the only promise he has made to me.

The Opposition supports this Bill. It would be churlish of it to do otherwise because it fulfils a plank of the 1996 election platform of the Liberal Party; likewise it fulfils a plank of the 2000 election platform of the Australian Labor Party.

Hon Peter Foss: That sounds a good enough reason not to do it.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I do not know that it is. We will not be churlish and reject it simply because the form of the Bill is different from that which we introduced in the Planning Appeals Bill 1999.

Hon Kim Chance: If we applied the same logic to one vote, one value, does that mean you will vote for it?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I suggest that when the Leader of the House introduces a Bill that truly is about one vote, one value rather than a slogan about equal representation, I will give it my considerable thought. However, if he is talking about the electoral reform Bills now before the House, he should be patient and I will divulge my intentions when that Bill is debated.

Hon Kim Chance: I wait with bated breath.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The Leader of the House should not hold his breath too long.

The reason given for this Bill in the early briefings by the minister's staff were threefold: first, a desire to relieve the minister of workload; second, a perception of political interference; and third, a desire to retain the best features of the tribunal and ministerial appeals system - in other words, to merge the best features of those two. I want to respond to the first of these: the desire to relieve the minister of workload. I do not have a great deal of sympathy for that. A person who accepts the important role of a minister, must anticipate a considerable workload. A more important consideration is not the reduction of workload, but whether that work is appropriate for a minister and whether it can be done more effectively and efficiently in another way.

Hon Kim Chance: Would it have been more accurate to use the adjective "inappropriate" with "workload" than workload alone?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Yes; it is an unfortunate use of words. I notice that in subsequent briefing notes it was eliminated.

Hon Peter Foss: She has not been doing it for the past eight months anyway!

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I do not want to cast "nasturtiums" on any minister.

Every time we take legislative action to change the role of the minister by depriving that minister of some independent discretionary authority, we effectively diminish the standing of the role of minister - not the standing of the person, but the institution of minister. I suggest that the institution of minister, regardless of what we might say from time to time from partisan positions about persons who fill the role of minister, regardless of some of the political sniping that we all indulge in for cheap points, all of us -

Hon Kim Chance interjected.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The Leader of the House can point his finger in any direction in this House; it is part of the theatre of this place. It is part of the game we play in dealing with bearded nerds who want to interfere in the debate.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Which bearded nerd are you talking about?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I am trying to make a serious point.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Jon Ford): Order! A little less theatre would be appreciated.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I have always worked on the proposition that people have hair on their faces because they have something to hide.

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*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm*