

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [10.04 pm]: I move -

That the house do now adjourn.

Hon Vince Catania, Comment about Federal Member for Kalgoorlie - Adjournment Debate

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [10.05 pm]: I will take a couple of minutes of the house's time to reflect on a speech made by Hon Vince Catania last night during the adjournment debate. The honourable member raised the issue of aged-care facilities in Carnarvon. It is right and proper that he should do so. I commend him for bringing that matter to the attention of the house. I do not want to argue that matter tonight, other than to say that his speech on behalf of the Carnarvon community was well thought out and worthy of being delivered in this house. The honourable member frequently speaks during adjournment debates. There are times when I think that the One Nation half hour, as it used to be called, could well and truly be renamed the Vince Catania travelogue section, because he uses the adjournment debate to tell us what he is doing and the places in his electorate that he has visited. I commend him for that, because that is what new members ought to do.

I was saddened to hear on the speaker in my office last night and to read in today's *Hansard* the final sentence of his speech. It was a cheap shot from a person I have come to respect. In his speech last night, Hon Vince Catania made a very unfair and incorrect assertion about the federal member for Kalgoorlie. The uncorrected version of *Hansard* reads -

It is also a failure on the part of the federal member for Kalgoorlie, who has not fought for what I believe are the rights of regional Western Australia.

During my time as a member of Parliament, I have seen many members come and go. Some members have been lazy and some have worked extraordinarily hard. I have never met one who works as hard as the federal member for Kalgoorlie. He never stops working on behalf of his electorate. I am sure that Hon Vince Catania is aware of this. The federal member for Kalgoorlie travels incessantly from one end of his vast electorate to the other. He represents the interests of all his constituents without fear or favour. He is absolutely diligent in the way in which he represents his electorate.

Hon Vincent Catania: Perhaps I should have said that his colleague the federal Minister for Health and Ageing has failed him.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not know whether I could have accepted that as a fair and reasonable comment because I do not know whether it is a fair and reasonable comment. If the fault lies with the federal minister, the member should have said so. The federal member for Kalgoorlie has been fighting for tax relief for our region every day of his political life and still he has not succeeded in getting the federal Treasurer to go along with him. That is the fault of the Treasurer; it is not the fault of Barry Haase. I say to Hon Vince Catania that people in this business are entitled to be given credit where credit is due. If Hon Vince Catania wants to criticise the federal government for not doing something in Carnarvon, he should criticise the responsible minister, not the federal member, because of all the members of Parliament I know, he works harder than anybody. I have told him that and I have told others that. I do not always agree with him, but I could never deny that he has anything but the best interests of his constituents foremost in his mind at all times. The comment made by Hon Vince Catania was grossly unfair. Hon Vince Catania knows that I am absolutely right.

Fitzroy Crossing Liquor Laws - Adjournment Debate

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral) [10.09 pm]: I concur with the Leader of the Opposition's remarks. However, I have risen to speak about another issue, and I am glad that the Minister for Racing and Gaming is back in the chamber. Today, a public meeting held in Fitzroy Crossing was attended by 100 people, most of whom are construction workers working on a new power house and other government buildings. Their gripe is with the change to the liquor laws in Fitzroy Crossing. Their gripe is that they cannot buy mid-strength beer. I am not talking about full-strength beer; I am talking about mid-strength beer - the 3.5 per cent Carlton Mid or XXXX Gold that is commonly drunk in the area. Yesterday, it was 43 degrees in Fitzroy Crossing. That is pretty warm. It is certainly an area where a cold beer goes down very well. These people do not want to have to drink at the hotel; they want to be able to drink back at their campsite or wherever they are accommodated.

Another interesting point is that full-strength beer is still served in the hotel. One can visit the hotel and drink full-strength beer. I recently spoke to a former publican of The Crossing Inn. He ran the hotel for the 11 years that I called in there, and he did an excellent job. When I first went up there, he had just taken over and there were cans and mess everywhere. He introduced a scheme for returning cans. In fact, an extra 5c was charged for a can. All the kids and other people picked up the cans and delivered them back to the hotel. A crusher was

bought and the cans were crushed. I will give a plug to Toll transport, which carted the cans to Perth free of charge. The funds from the scrap went back into the community at Fitzroy Crossing to aid the children with different things that they needed such as a school and so on. The next time I visited the hotel, I could not believe how clean the area was. The publican operated the hotel very well. During a conversation I had with him last weekend, I asked him what he thought of the new liquor laws. This was before I was contacted about today's public meeting. He said that they would not work because people would go to the hotel and consume large amounts of full-strength beer before they set off with their takeaways of 2.4 per cent light beer. One of those light beers is enough for anyone who is a consumer of any type of beer.

At the public meeting, it was put very politely to me that if a change was not made, the workers on all the building sites would be quite happy to go on strike. They say that it is hard enough to retain labourers in the town now during the difficult times and with high temperatures, but to cut off their supply of mid-strength grog as well is the pits and will make them disappear to a more conducive work environment. Prohibition has never worked. The distance from Fitzroy Crossing to Derby is some 250 kilometres. That might sound like a long way, but it is not a long distance in that area; 250 kilometres is traversed fairly easily in today's vehicles. How will we prevent alcohol from being brought into the town - or the sly grog sales as I call them? Will all the caravans that travel through the area be searched? It is absolutely ridiculous that this situation has arisen. The two women who lobbied for this change were invited to the public meeting today but they did not turn up.

I believe that a similar scheme was trialled in Derby some years ago. In fact, I know of a better scheme whereby there are no alcohol sales on one day a week to coincide with the day for Centrelink payments or any other payment, which is usually a Thursday. I was informed today that that scheme was tried in Derby but it did not work.

One of the problems in the area is drugs. Even if we were to go down the path that has been proposed to restrict the sale of full and mid-strength alcohol, people will turn to, and use, other substances. I do not believe that will work. It is fine to make those types of laws. Everyone thinks that they will make a difference. It may be politically acceptable to make that type of law so that everyone down here can read it in the newspaper and think that the government of the day is doing something. However, people up there who are trying to work and do the right thing are being inconvenienced. It is difficult to get labour in those areas, particularly at this time of the year when it reaches 40 degrees. Only one trigger is needed for those people to leave.

Federal Member for Kalgoorlie - Adjournment Debate

HON VINCENT CATANIA (Mining and Pastoral) [10.15 pm]: Perhaps I can clarify for Hon Norman Moore the remarks I made during last night's adjournment debate about the federal member for Kalgoorlie. I will explain why I have been so critical of, and harsh on, the federal member. I understand that he gets around the electorate, and I commend him for that. I was talking to him just a month ago when he told me that he had spent only 100 nights at home. He works hard to get around his electorate. My ministerial colleagues will know that I fought very hard for the community of Carnarvon to get the right decision made on the location of its police station and courthouse. I fought very hard and pestered my colleagues. I made sure that they knew what the community wanted. Having taken that approach and having seen the federal member for Kalgoorlie also travelling around the Mining and Pastoral Region, which covers a fair chunk of the federal electorate of Kalgoorlie, I have come across issues from time to time for which the federal member for Kalgoorlie has made promises that he has been unable to deliver. The promise he made regarding the aged care facility is one such promise. He has known about this issue for several months and yet several months have gone by and we have been unable to come up with a solution to the problem. Seniors have been coming into my office every day since the decision was made to wind down the aged care facility in Carnarvon and they have been crying and asking me for my help because they do not know where they will go. These people have no other option in Carnarvon because there are no other aged care facilities in Carnarvon or the Gascoyne. The Olive Laird Hostel is the only aged care facility between Geraldton and Port Hedland. Their only other option is to go to Geraldton or Perth. Members should try telling a 75-year-old or a 95-year-old that he must leave the Gascoyne. It is not right. It is un-Australian, if I can put it that way. The federal member has made representations to the company. Effectively, he has said, "She'll be right, mate. We'll get the funding and sort it out. Even though the federal government has changed the goalposts, we'll make sure that you will get the funding and there will be an aged care facility." He stated on the radio the other day that the federal government is happy to work with any provider that wants to go there. There is a provider there at the moment. Why do we not work together to make sure that the provider stays and that the senior citizens of Carnarvon are kept in their rightful home, which is Carnarvon?

That is not the only incident. The state government was willing to put its hand in its pocket and provide the Denham medical services with \$35 000 and the Shire of Shark Bay was going to provide \$15 000. The federal member said that he would make sure that the federal government put in \$45 000 to provide a regular health

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL - Wednesday, 19 September 2007]

p5282c-5284a

Hon Kim Chance; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Ken Baston; Mr Vincent Catania

service for Denham. However, that fell through, and we were unable to provide a consistent service to Denham. These are the important issues that are facing regional Western Australians.

Hon Norman Moore: Have you achieved everything you have sought to achieve?

Hon VINCENT CATANIA: The member for Kalgoorlie has failed to deliver. We all know that we cannot always deliver, but when a promise is made to the community, particularly to our senior citizens, it must be followed through. When the federal government has a federal surplus, particularly in an election year, I would have thought that it would come through and support the senior citizens of this country, particularly the senior citizens of the federal member's electorate. I hope that clarifies things for Hon Norman Moore, and I hope he can lobby his colleague - they are his constituents as well - to make sure the federal government comes up with the assistance that the senior citizens of Carnarvon desperately need.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.19 pm
