

HANSARD

12 AUGUST 2010

RETAIL TRADING HOURS AMENDMENT (MIDLAND TOURISM PRECINCT) BILL 2010

Second Reading

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.20 pm]: I support the Retail Trading Hours (Midland Tourism Precinct) Bill 2010, but I would like to place some caveats on that for future thought. I understand the reasons behind this bill. The fundamental reason is that the government had to throw a bone to the people opposite to draw them into the twenty-first century, and it has achieved some positive ends.

First, it allows people—in this case in Midland, but also in Armadale and Joondalup—to have deregulated shopping hours, which is a positive in itself. Those areas are, to a great extent, shopping centres, which is good. Secondly, it has exposed the hypocrisy of the Labor Party on a range of issues and, through that exposure, forced members opposite to begin to negotiate more widely on deregulation of shopping hours, particularly on weekdays. It will also eventually lead to wider deregulation.

However, on behalf of my constituents of Riverton, I have to highlight some problems with this issue. Most importantly, it discriminates against people in my electorate. People in Riverton do not shop, do not want to shop and will not shop in Midland, Armadale, Joondalup or Fremantle to a great extent. They might go to Victoria Park, but the boundaries exclude one of the most important shopping centres in that area. They want to go to Booragoon or Westfield Carousel.

Mr J.M. Francis: Or even Cannington. They would be upset if they could not shop in Cannington.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. However, they cannot do that. So a fundamental problem with this issue is that it discriminates. That is why the Labor Party members wanted it that way. They wanted to choose areas that effectively discriminated in favour of their electorates and against others. It is not just access to shopping. If this legislation remains in place for a long time, it will draw investment in shopping centres—in many suburban areas, shopping centres are the biggest investment source—away from Riverton and the adjacent areas of Bateman to Midland, Joondalup and others. That is the objective—namely, to put into law, legislation that discriminates against some areas in favour of others.

I understand that we have to throw a bone to Labor Party members to lure them into the twenty-first century, but it has an impact. It has a significant impact in my electorate, in which we have the metropolitan markets in the Canning Vale industrial centre. It is the major distribution place for wholesale, and to some extent retail, produce. It has Sunday markets now, and has done for a long time, but eventually it is planned that it will be a major, widely based shopping centre.

It has the facilities, the space, the scope and the demand, particularly with the growth of the population in Canning Vale and Southern River and the demands of that population. As it is not included in a precinct, whereas Midland and Armadale are, it will have a hard time attracting investment to achieve its potential. This is an example of the costs to be borne by other places. Therefore, we have a fundamental discrimination.

However, let me go back to the issue of hypocrisy. It is important to highlight it when it pops up in this place.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Are you talking about the Premier?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, I am talking about Mr O’Gorman. In this place on Tuesday, 18 August 2009, when we were discussing a bill to extend shopping centres on weekdays, he popped up and said, “I have surveyed my electorate on extended shopping centres and found that 85 per cent are against deregulation. On top of that, I have been speaking to all the retailers in my electorate, and they are being persecuted by shopping centre leasing agents, and that will get worse. Some of them have even gone to the extent of threatening suicide.”

He said that there would be mass layoffs if there was any deregulation; that is, we were talking about extending weekday shopping centres by 12 hours a week. He said that people would be forced to work 70 hours a week—slave labour. He also claimed that there would be a large increase in the cost of lease arrangements. He also said that the only people who would survive would be the owners of big national companies and big multinational companies. He went on to say —

That is how well connected I am to my community. I listen to my community and I stand up for my community. I do it in this chamber, in the caucus room and in public. I will always stand up for my electorate.

He was dead set against any change to trading hours.

Three months later, on Tuesday, 29 November 2009, he popped up again. This was in the context of the bill to extend trading hours in Joondalup. What was that bill about? It was about not only late-night shopping, but also Sunday shopping—a significant expansion of trading hours. What did we find?

There was a change. He was the leader of it. He was going around his community and in this house saying that not only was he in favour of deregulation, he was the leader of it. He was asked why. The last time he did a poll, he found that 85 per cent of the people were against deregulation. This time he did a poll and found that 68 per cent of the people were for it. Remember, he talked to everybody in his electorate. He also found that even people over 61 years of age wanted Sunday shopping.

When he was asked what happened, he just said that he went out and listened again. What happened was that he was against it previously because he did not want change, but this time—this highlights the weakness of the bill—he was for it because he got a bone that discriminated against people opposite him. He got uncompetitive treatment. Joondalup got preference over every other place.

People will look at that—this is the usefulness of this—and they will know that the member for Joondalup is a hypocrite and that the deregulation is inadequate. People in my electorate will look at that and say, “This man came up and supported the 2009 policy of the Labor Party and was against any deregulation. Then when his electorate got preferential treatment and got extended shopping hours, he was the champion for it.” It is hypocritical. This is not just about a person’s character; this is about discriminating against people in Riverton, in Southern River, in Jandakot and in other places. It is disgraceful. However, we had to do this. We had to throw Labor Party members a bone and draw them into the twenty-first century. Minister, if that is what we had to do, I support the bill. But we should not give up. We can throw them another bone and then lure them in, because sometimes they have to get re-elected.