

MAJOR CRICKET EVENTS BILL (Serial 144)

Continued from 1 May 2003.

Mr MILLS (Blain): Madam Speaker, with regards to the need to provide some security for the holding of the international cricket matches, the opposition understands it is necessary to disallow any intrusion upon the playing field. When you see a world class event being presented here in Darwin, we realise that what comes with that is the loss of something we have enjoyed; being the capacity to jump over the fence and celebrate great victories. On occasions, we have seen at some of our grand finals or feature matches, some people provide a bit of additional entertainment by going for a run with nothing on. Rather than spend time worrying about that, as a level of maturity in this debate, it is understood that this is required and this passage of legislation will be fully supported by the opposition.

We recognise that this is an historic stage where we now enter into the capacity for the Northern Territory to begin its part in featuring international cricket. To that end, this passage of legislation will pass with the full support of the opposition.

Mr HENDERSON (Business, Industry and Resource Development): Madam Speaker, I speak in support of this bill this evening. This is really an exciting time for Territorians, particularly cricket loving Territorians, to see for the first time in the Northern Territory a test match and one-day games against Bangladesh this year, and Sri Lanka next year. This legislation, as the member for Blain states, is insisted on by the Australian Cricket Board in order to protect players, which is the primary reason why the ACB insists on this legislation being in all jurisdictions where the Australian cricket team plays cricket. It is to protect the players.

It also includes significant penalties for breaches of this legislation, particularly to prevent some potential unscrupulous corporate sector people paying somebody a significant amount of money to streak naked across the cricket field advertising a particular product. The member of Blain stated that potentially this is at a cost of some cherished part of the free-loving lifestyle of Territorians. I must admit, in the 21 years I have been here, at numerous sporting events, it is not an everyday or every match occurrence that somebody gets their kit off and decides to run across the pitch. Territorians will find that this legislation is a very small price to pay to secure international cricket in Darwin.

The last time there was a significant cricket event in Darwin - I do not recall the year but it must be going back at least 10 years, probably a bit

longer - was at Gardens Oval when we had a demonstration team. I forgot what the occasion was but, certainly, some of the old champions from the previous Australian cricket teams turned out in Darwin. Territorians saw a great spectacle of Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thompson coming in off their long runs and bowling to a Territorian side, and with Rodney Marsh behind the stumps. There was a huge crowd there that day. People had a great time and it was a fantastic event at Gardens Oval. We have not seen anything like that for many, many years.

I genuinely believe that there is a big buzz of excitement around Darwin and I reckon it will be a real boost for the tourism industry. There will be people coming from other parts of the Territory, from the top end of Queensland and Western Australia, and many people from interstate to see this historic event. It is not only great for the tourism industry in terms of the hotels, taxis and hire cars, but also for restaurants, pubs and clubs, and retail outlets and tourism operators whilst they are here. It is a real opportunity to showcase Darwin to the rest of the country. There will be a live broadcast of the cricket, and we will be working with those operators to ensure that we highlight what Darwin has to offer outside of being a cricket venue.

It is good to hear that there is support from the opposition for this bill. I do not have the press clippings here with me this afternoon, but I take the opposition back to comments that were made by the Opposition Leader. I will leave it to the member for Sanderson who has the exact comment. However, there was a great desecration to our lifestyle - that was the Leader of the Opposition: 'it was a shameful attack on the Territory lifestyle'. He received a fair amount of press coverage for it.

It has been an interesting day in the House today. Once again, the member for Blain was overruled in his bid to be Leader of the Opposition. Obviously, there has been a bit of a coup in the party wing regarding this particular bill, and credit to the member for Blain that he has managed to roll the Leader of the Opposition on this. The Leader of the Opposition is on the record that he was not going to support this in the Northern Territory until hell froze over; such was the sacrilege and the attack on the Territorian lifestyle that this legislation would impose on fun-loving Territorians who enjoyed getting their kit off at cricket matches - and it was an absolutely offensive attack on their right to do that.

Well, I am really pleased that the member for Blain has the numbers in the party room. He has managed to roll the Opposition Leader on this. Maybe it is a sign of the times to come when the member for Blain will be calling the shots on all legislation before this House. I have to say that I