

expression of the child. However, article 13(2) provides that restrictions may be imposed which are necessary for the protection of public health or morals, among other things. Article 14(1) confers on a child the rights of freedom of thought, conscience and religion. However, article 14(2) provides that rights and duties of parents to provide direction to the child shall be respected by state parties. Article 15(1) confers rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. However, 15(2) provides that restrictions may be imposed for the protection of public health and morals and public order, among other things.

It should also be recognised that the convention confers rights on parents and families as well as children, and places restrictions on the ability of governments to intervene in families. Article 18(3) provides that state parties should take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible. Article 9 provides that state parties shall ensure that children shall not be separated from their parents against their will except when, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and subject to judiciary review, competent authorities determine that such separation is necessary in the best interests of the child.

While the concerns of the community may be largely unfounded, I do not believe that the federal government should sign or ratify the convention while those concerns exist. The federal government should not sign the convention until the community has had adequate time to consider and debate its contents and to become informed about what it actually contains. I am concerned too that the convention is inconsistent with some areas of Northern Territory legislation. I believe that, before the convention is ratified by Australia, the federal government should register a reservation over those areas of it so that it does not conflict with state laws.

I raised this matter with the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General earlier this year and I expressed doubts about what powers the convention would give the federal government to legislate in areas which, traditionally, have belonged to the states. There are precedents where this has occurred in the past, and this is another issue which I believe should be fully debated before the convention is ratified. In other words, because of concerns in the community, I believe that it is important that the matter be aired and debated fully so that, whether they be founded or unfounded, the concerns that people have can be addressed. I will be bringing this matter before Cabinet formally in the near future and, in so doing, I will certainly take into account of what has been said today.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS BILL

(Serial 277)

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL

(Serial 278)

Continued from 28 February 1990.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, the opposition's position in relation to the creation of a position of Director of Public Prosecutions was placed before this Assembly during debate in the May sittings last year. The opposition supports that proposal. At that time, the government did not