



PRIVATE CERTIFIERS

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (11:40): I will support this motion and I will briefly outline why. I want to consider two issues. The first is that I think it is appropriate to have a select committee of this house. It makes good sense if you review something to have it reviewed by one body and then to have the implementation, if you like, done by the other place (the minister and the shadow minister in the upper house). So, it makes sense to keep the two decision-makers at arm's length, to some extent, so you get a freer review. I think it is worthwhile having the inquiry in this house.

The second and more substantial issue is that the inquiry is important and, therefore, the inquiry's terms of reference are important. I will give a case study to show why it is important that we have this inquiry. A constituent of mine came to see me regarding a veranda he had built on a house. This veranda was in excess of \$40,000, so it was a substantial veranda. In fact, after building that veranda, they had more water under it than they did on top of it—it was leaking, the water went into the house—the whole thing was just bad engineering. But this had been approved.

Mr Griffiths: Poor construction is not necessarily engineering, is it?

Mr PICCOLO: If you listen for a moment, I will get to that point; that is the point I want to make. We must look at the whole process from design to installation and identify the weaknesses in the process. The weakness in the process in this case was that this matter—

Mr Venning: It rained.

Mr PICCOLO: If the member for Schubert would listen for once, it would help. In this case, the contractor who installed the veranda lodged the private certifier's engineering specifications with the council. In this case, though, the contractor had obtained a standard certification which he used for every veranda, irrespective of what the design was, and he lodged that. As a result, this person got a substandard veranda. The council, quite rightly, said that it had certification from the engineer and approved it.

We talked to the council. How could the council allow this to happen? They said that the documentation was there. The documentation was not quite all there, and this veranda had not been built for the purpose of that house but rather with the specifications that were based on a standard veranda which had been certified.

There is a very basic and important flaw in the process at the moment. It is not just about safety; it is about basic consumer law, too, to ensure that the consumer gets what they are buying. In this case, the law is tied up in this process of certification. So, because of those sorts of examples—and I am sure there are many of those examples which I have highlighted—this review is important, and I think the opposition is just being silly in opposing it.

Secondly, this is an appropriate house to have that review. I am not sure how the member for Schubert can stand up and oppose this review. I am sure this happens in his electorate, and I hope he has supported his consumers in his electorate because it does not sound like he is. That is not to say that all contractors are shonky; they are not, but there are people who are. This is a weakness in the process which needs to be rectified. Hopefully, this review will highlight that weakness and make some recommendations.