



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard 19 November 1998

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—LP) (8.33 p.m.): It is with considerable concern that I have learned that this Labor Government intends to interfere with the operation of one of the best departments in the Public Service, the Department of the Treasury. Under the guise of the term "restructure", positions will be spilled and advertised.

The Labor Government has already attempted to gut the Treasury Department. The member for Capalaba has already taken the very efficient unit covering commercial projects and shifted it into his own department. That unit worked as an integrated part of the whole Department of Treasury. It was very professional and competent and was an aid not only to industry and business but also worked with the rest of Treasury and had to provide total expertise to all the departments.

Other attempts at devaluing Treasury's powers and abilities have been put into operation by this Government. Because of the very responsibility that is its charter, the Treasury Department must look to efficient management and control of the Government's—that is the people's—resources and assets. Because it has an overriding view of the financial responsibility of all departments, it would be fair to say that it is not the most loved. However, it fulfils its role with impartiality and expertise. It is a fact that because of the excellent work done by Treasury officers, many are offered lucrative jobs in the private sector by companies that have been dealing with the Government and have realised these officers' abilities.

The Labor Government may think that weakening the Treasury Department will achieve its political ends. However, it fails to realise that this department and its officers are its greatest strength. In my time as Treasurer, I was well served and advised by this department, and I thank it for that. However, Treasury officers also advise and work with all departments and impartially advise the Government of the day, as all good career public servants do.

When in Government I moved to allow senior, able Treasury officers to participate in an exchange program with their counterparts in the UK. This is commonly done in business and industry and it enables senior and promising employees to gain valuable experience and expertise. The Government and the people of Queensland as a whole benefited. Instead of applauding this action, this current Government, then in Opposition, accused me of pandering to fat cats and did not support this project.

Time expired.
