



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.05 p.m.): I realise that this is a fairly late stage of this very last day of Parliament for 1998, so I will keep my remarks reasonably brief. The Opposition will not be opposing this Bill, because it is basically very similar to the Bill that was introduced by our previous Minister, the member for Noosa. It basically sets out to do the same sorts of things. It sets out to bring this Act up to date, it sets out to make the Act more flexible, and it sets out to have one single fund instead of the three funds that have existed previously.

The Industrial Development Act dates back to 1963, when it was brought into place by the Nicklin Government. At that stage, it provided for the Industries Assistance Board, which was previously constituted under the Labour and Industry Act 1946. That Act provided assistance for the acquisition of land for industrial purposes on which to establish a business pertaining to any industry, or to expand an existing business pertaining to any industry. It also provided for an industries assistance fund, an industrial estates construction fund and the estates maintenance fund. Over the years, seven amendments were made to the Act, leading up to the Bill that was placed on the table in March of this year. Then we had the election. As a result, we have before us this Bill which was introduced by the current Minister.

The Industrial Development Act, and its subsequent amendments, was a significant initiative when it was introduced in 1963. It was designed to enhance industrial development throughout the State. The primary objective of the legislation was to enable the granting of financial assistance and to provide land-based forms of assistance to industry in Queensland.

I believe that all members would be familiar with the various industrial estates around Queensland. There are some 54 of them—from major technology parks in the city, to larger industrial estates in the regional cities, and even to some smaller industrial estates in country towns. Over the years, those estates have been very useful in attracting industries to particular areas. Local governments often work very closely with the State Government in an endeavour to attract industries to their particular areas.

Some 65 industrial estates and three technology research parks were developed during that time. They provided some 6,831 hectares of industrial land, and more than 2,500 individual manufacturers benefited from the industrial estates program. As I said, there are currently 54 industrial estates throughout Queensland. From the funds that are derived from those estates, a dividend of \$3m is paid to Treasury through the corporate arrangements involved with those estates. It is interesting to see how the asset value of those estates has increased dramatically over the years. I understand that, in June 1989, some \$98m had been expended on those technology parks and estates. The current value of those estates is somewhere in the order of \$320m even though, over recent years, some of that land has been sold off. Add to that the value of the structures on some of those estates, and that could bring that value to somewhere in the order of \$0.5 billion.

I believe it is important to note that, under coalition policy, there were a number of very clear policy objectives to foster State development. They included policy principles such as decentralised economic development; productive Queensland enterprises and economic development agencies; an internationally competitive business environment; investment capital for sustainable development

opportunities; Queensland enterprises, particularly those which are export orientated and export ready; industries which will prosper in the 21st century; sustainable rural economic development opportunities; effective and efficient infrastructure for economic development; flexible industrial relations facilitating maximum choice for the development of productive workplace arrangements; and increased Government and industry investment in vocational education and training.

Importantly, this policy of the coalition recognised that economic development will be overwhelmingly driven by the private sector, with the Government playing a key role in creating the right environment for investment to happen. Through the various initiatives and programs, the coalition Government made a direct contribution to the State's growth and the State's export figures, which continued to surge despite the Asian economic slump. The coalition Government was concerned about providing assistance to Queensland businesses to effect a growth boost in international trade and to entrench an export culture throughout the State.

Queensland's prosperity is built on exports and the attracting of investment in industry. Last year, Queensland earned some \$19 billion from exports. Trade revenue accounts for about 20% of all State income. Under the coalition Government, Queensland exporters defied national trends. ABS figures show that Queensland's export growth outpaced other States. Queensland's share of the nation's exports rose to 18.39% compared with 17.34% for the same period in 1996-97. The coalition Government certainly had an enviable record for attracting investment and industry. Investment is vital for expanding the diversifying State economy. Through the attraction of new investment and the establishment of new industry from overseas, Queensland is now in a better position to access world export markets and benefit from additional employment generation.

Under the coalition Government, a large number of Australian and international companies demonstrated their confidence in Queensland by moving here or expanding their operations here. Some of those included Voxson, Mack Trucks, Boeing, Comalco, Shell Coal, DHL, Dascom, John Deere, Qantas, Filtronic Comtek, Silicon Graphics, Southern Pacific Petroleum/Central Pacific Minerals, Australian Air Express, Andersen Consulting and so the list goes on. Investment in major development projects, of which Queensland has 25% nationally, generates exports and many thousands of new jobs. The coalition Government had on its books projects—either committed or proposed—with a value of nearly \$16 billion, plus industry and investment generating, or with the potential to generate, some 20,300 new jobs.

The State Economic Development Strategy was released by the coalition Government in May 1996. That document set out the direction for the State's future economic development. The Borbidge Government had a master plan. It had a strategic plan for 1997-2007. That strategy built on the achievements of Queensland's businesses and industries and the strength of Queensland's regions. It detailed directions for sustained economic development over the next decade. Primarily, the strategy was concerned with the provision of a supportive environment that would enable the private sector to make the most of economic opportunities in order to grow and to prosper. That economic strategy was one of the five key components of the coalition Government's strategic plan for 1997-2007. The objective of the State Economic Development Strategy was to create wealth and sustainable employment opportunities for Queenslanders by improving the productivity performance of the Queensland economy.

This Bill can contribute to economic growth. As I said earlier in my speech, we are all familiar with industrial estates in the cities, regions and rural areas. It is a good opportunity to provide extra incentives for industries to come to those areas. It is an opportunity to put together industrial estates that cater for particular industries. We have to keep in mind that this should not necessarily be done entirely by the Government. Let us see private enterprise get in and put together industrial estates and technology parks. Some of the new technology parks are very attractive. They are different from the old-style industrial areas. The new parks have attractive warehouses. When I am driving home to Toowoomba, I often see the new-style industrial estate near the Oxley roundabout. There are some very impressive industrial estates. The new styling and landscaping can make industrial areas very acceptable to a suburb, district or town. They do not need to be just places that are out in the backblocks. Those estates provide a new lift to industry generally.

As I said, the Opposition is prepared to support this Bill. It is very similar in almost every respect to the legislation the coalition introduced earlier in the year. As this is the last parliamentary sitting evening of the year and some people have a long way to travel to get home, in the true spirit of Christmas, I will restrict my comments to that.
