



Speech by

Mr RUSSELL COOPER

MEMBER FOR CROWS NEST

Hansard 5 August 1998

BRISBANE EXHIBITION; PRIMARY PRODUCERS

Mr COOPER (Crows Nest—NPA) (10.21 a.m.): I, too, wish to draw the attention of honourable members of the Chamber to the Royal National Association Brisbane Exhibition, affectionately known as "The Ekka". I commend it to all members of the House. This is bush week and, during bush week, Mr Speaker, we are allowed a certain amount of latitude.

Government members interjected.

Mr COOPER: I would like to think so. I commend the Ekka to members opposite. It is the culmination of hundreds of country shows around the State. It is an opportunity for people in primary industries—industries that provide the wealth of this State—from right across Queensland to display their wares. That industry means an enormous amount to the State—about \$5.5 billion in exports.

Primary production is not for the faint-hearted. It is very tough. Back in the 1950s—a lot of members opposite were not born then—when there were three or four billion people in the world, just about any primary product could be sold. Today, there are about six or seven billion people in the world, yet hardly anything can be sold. It is very frustrating and difficult for primary producers to know what on earth is going on. That is a dilemma. The industry is not for the faint-hearted. It is a way of life, and a very productive one.

There is a lot of experience amongst country people who have been in business for up to six generations. That is experience that cannot be bought and the sort of experience that we want to keep in place. It is no use putting people off the land and saying, "Thanks for that. We'll see you later. Go to the city and meet your country cousins coming down." That is not what it is all about. People from the city cannot just go out into the bush and suddenly take up that type of industry without experience. That is why we must not only pay tribute to those people from the bush with the experience who have put up with such enormously difficult times but also try to keep them there producing——

Time expired.
