



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard 25 March 1999

MR L. AND MRS K. BILNEY

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—LP) (10.24 a.m.): I speak on an issue of grave concern to many Queenslanders and, in particular, to two of my constituents, Len and Kay Bilney. Mr and Mrs Bilney consulted Prestige Constructions with regard to building a new home for them. They were told that they would need to make a preliminary deposit of \$1,500 in order for their home to progress. They did this on Friday, 12 February and put the money into the bank nominated by the construction company. They contacted the company on Monday, 15 February and Tuesday, 16 February and could not obtain any information. They subsequently discovered that on Tuesday, 16 February the salesman was advised that the company was in the hands of the administrators Worrell Whitehill.

On Wednesday, 17 February the Bilneys were advised by the salesman and tried to stop the cheque. But their Adelaide credit union advised them that the cheque had been honoured on Monday, 15 February. This was the same day that Mr Mike Simpson, son of the directors of the company, was in Brisbane arranging for the appointment of administrators. The Bilneys had interviewed Mr Simpson only a few days before the directors visited Brisbane to arrange the appointment of the administrators and had received his personal assurance that the company did not have any problems. Therefore, they acted in good faith, deposited their \$1,500 and promptly lost it.

The Bilneys are retired and can ill afford to lose this money. They believe—and the facts as presented tend to substantiate their belief—that they were deliberately defrauded of their money by an insolvent company. They have contacted the administrators but have been told that secured creditors will be paid out first if, indeed, there are any salvageable assets left in the company. However, all the subcontractors, who are hardworking small businesspeople, and citizens such as the Bilneys will miss out.

I ask Judy Spence, as the Minister with portfolio responsibilities that cover issues such as these, to ensure that the personal assets of the directors of Prestige Homes are taken into consideration when endeavouring to deliver some justice to my constituents and also to ensure that any amendments to current legislation are made to bring equity back into the regulation of the building industry and to protect innocent consumers such as the Bilneys.

Time expired.
