



Speech by

Dr PETER PRENZLER

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

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STATE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS ORGANISATION AMENDMENT BILL

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (9.55 p.m.): Firstly, I begin by voicing my strong opposition to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Bill 1999. The Bill was introduced by the Labor Government to seek to make a number of amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971.

I must admit that most of the amendments contained in this Bill are satisfactory, for example, those amendments pertaining to the environmental impact assessment procedures and the new conflict of interest code for members of project boards. However, I am quite disturbed about the amendments made to section 78 of the Act, which gives the power of the Coordinator-General to take land, and to section 91, which relates to investigating the potential of infrastructure facilities. This Bill, if passed, will give the Coordinator-General the power to acquire freehold land on behalf of the private sector for the purpose of developing a public infrastructure facility. The Bill also allows the Coordinator-General to authorise investigators to enter private lands for the purpose of investigating the land's suitability for the future development of an infrastructure facility.

Quite frankly, it never ceases to amaze me what this Government will try to do next. What right does this Government have to act on behalf of a third party to access and then take away privately held land from its owner, especially when that third party is going to use that land to derive a profit? In the Minister's second-reading speech, he advised members of this House that the role of the Government in the traditional areas of public works and infrastructure provision is changing. He also advised that we are no longer living in a simple world in which Governments are free to commit large sums of public moneys to large scale infrastructure works.

The Minister then went on to say that there is a national and international trend for increased private sector involvement in public infrastructure development and that by encouraging private investment in Queensland public works, taxpayers' funds could be redirected to other vital calls on the Government, such as education and health. There may be some truth in the Minister's comments. However, I definitely draw the line at encouraging private sector involvement in public infrastructure if it means selling short the rights of freehold landowners.

One thing that needs to be remembered is that private developers will be interested only in the good old dollars. At the end of the day, private developers will not undertake any projects if they are not financially lucrative. Therefore, the fact that this Government supports the profiting of the private sector to the detriment of landowners is inexcusable. Let me put this Bill into perspective for a moment. We have the typical little Aussie battler who works very, very hard for a living. He has saved with his family an amount of money for a deposit on an acreage property of his and his family's dreams. They now have a hefty mortgage commitment but they know that if they continue to work hard, one day the house and the land will be paid off and eventually it will be theirs for keeps—something that they can pass on to their children.

Everyone can identify with those typical, battling Aussies and their dreams of buying and then finally owning their family homes. However, in the case of this Aussie battler, about five years later, a foreign developer comes on the scene and puts forward a proposal to build a toll road between X and Y. The Coordinator-General declares the proposal to be of a public benefit and authorises the developer to have access to that Aussie battler's land for developing purposes—a bit like the BHP truck

landing in the back yard to which the member for Burdekin referred. Everything goes according to plan and the developer makes an offer to the family for the land. Of course, the offer is an insult to the family. They have worked hard and they maintain their unwillingness to sell their land to the developer. They have no intention of selling, as this is their home and their dream. The developer informs the Coordinator-General of the family's refusal to sell their property and the next thing they know is that the Government steps in and acquires their land anyway, and they have no recourse to Parliament or anybody else.

I cannot believe the audacity of the Beattie Government in saying that it should have the power to resume private property on behalf of the private sector. If landowners do not want to sell their properties to developers, they should not be forced to. If a developer really wants the land, they should be willing to negotiate and pay the price that the landowner wants. If there is no sale, that should be the end of it.

A One Nation member interjected.

Dr PRENZLER: No, it is certainly not. What right does the Government have to step in and do the dirty work for the developers? What right does it have to use its power for the benefit of developers and the detriment of the landowners? It seems that this is just another way of selling off parts of Australia for the benefit of big business. It is no wonder that the community and members are angry and concerned about what the Government is doing.

One Nation members have received numerous phone calls from people in our community who are frightened that the Beattie Government is trying to put them in a position where they will be powerless to defend themselves against land takeovers. This trend was set with the recent passing of the Transport (South Bank Corporation Area Land) Bill. Two individuals had won a Supreme Court challenge regarding the compulsory acquisition of their land and that decision was overturned by a Bill of the Parliament. That was the first example of a Government taking away the rights of individuals. The Government wants the power to resume land for the interests of third parties, and this is another example of the Government taking away the rights of individuals.

Enough is enough. Does this Government represent the individuals who pay their taxes and call Australia their home or the big foreign businesses that are owned by multinationals that are only interested in profiting from the citizens of this country? One does not have to be a genius to work that one out. It is all there in the Bill, in black and white.

One Nation strongly supports the rights of landowners who have worked hard and paid the price. It is bad enough that their properties can be resumed for legitimate Government purposes. Now they are threatened with compulsory land acquisition for the interests of the private sector. Along with every typical Queenslander, One Nation has always believed in the absolute sanctity of freehold title. The Bill will devalue freehold land and destroy the great Australian dream. There will also be some very nervous lending institutions that will see the equity levels of their borrowers nosedive as the freehold land that is used as collateral is devalued.

One Nation will oppose this amendment Bill because it conflicts with the interests of landowners in this country. I urge all members of the House to think before they vote tonight. The results will speak for themselves and will show clearly whether members represent the vast majority of Queenslanders, as has been spoken about very often in the House tonight, especially in the 6 o'clock debate, or whether they support the vested interest groups that are now plaguing our country. By opposing this Bill, One Nation will be supporting the rights of landowners.
