



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING

MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

Hansard 16 November 2000

PROPERTY CRIME

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (6.36 p.m.): This motion condemns the Minister for Police for his failure to stop the increasing rate of property crime, which now strikes one in 12 Queenslanders each year. I support this motion very, very strongly. The Minister can use figures, but he has failed to provide enough police on the ground, particularly in the north coast region.

Mr Pitt: You made this speech last week.

Mr LAMING: On a number of occasions I have bought up this—

Mr Pitt: And the week before.

Mr LAMING: I have only five minutes. I will come back to the member. I refer to property crime. What is property crime? Property crime includes unlawful entry, arson, other property damage, motor vehicle theft, other theft, fraud and handling of stolen goods.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr LAMING: Yes, fraud is included, too. We must not overlook that. In the last financial year, property crime in Queensland increased sharply by 8%. A total of 303,000 such crimes were reported to police. One in 12 people in this State has been affected by a reported property offence. Those offences also cause fear and extra cost in the community, not just to those who have been broken into. People are fearful that they might be next to be broken into. They spend money on security alarms, dogs and all of those sorts of things.

Property crime is now being solved at the rate of 25%, which is up 1%. That is good. However, that means that only 75,796 reported property crimes are solved and more than 200,000 property crimes are not solved. Seventy-eight per cent of offenders committing property crimes were male and nearly one third of them were aged between 15 and 19. So 200,000 property crimes are not solved and nearly 80% of them are caused by young males aged between 15 and 19. There are probably hundreds of teenagers out there in the community who are involved in these property offences, which is of concern. Those people are not being caught, so they will be at it again and again. So it is most important that the Minister redoubles efforts to make sure that we address the incidence of property crime.

All regions across the State have experienced an increase in property crime, except for the far north region. Where is the member for Mulgrave now? That is great news for him, but he must realise that his area has one police officer for every 412 people whereas on the Sunshine Coast—

A Government member interjected.

Mr LAMING: Okay, the member can say what he likes about that. I will finish with the member for Mulgrave and I will come to him later.

We have one police officer for every 760 people. There are twice as many police in the north coast region. That is good luck for the member but bad luck for us. I congratulate the hardworking police officers of the Sunshine Coast district for their efforts. They are doing a great job.

Mr Barton interjected.

Mr LAMING: The Minister is trying to put me off my game. He will not distract me from saying that I congratulate police on the great job they do. They do not get much support from the Minister. In

spite of their numbers, they do a damned good job. This increase in the ratio is unacceptably high. How can it be addressed? Mainly through increased police numbers!

I brought up this issue in the House during the sittings before last and the Minister had a go at me in the paper. That is fine. I raised the matter again during the debate on the Corrective Services Bill, when I spoke about the causes of crime. The Minister said in his letter to the editor—

"It astounds me any politician or group such as the Noosa Chamber of Commerce could seriously suggest decisions on where police are stationed should be left to politicians. It is not so many years since the problem associated with political interference in police operational matters was exposed by the Fitzgerald inquiry."

One week later, in the same newspaper, the same Tom Barton said—

"It should be pointed out that your local Member, Peter Wellington, was successful in convincing the Queensland Police Service for two extra general-duties police and two Juvenile Aid Bureau police for Nambour last year."

Mr BARTON: I rise to a point of order. The letter states that Peter Wellington was successful in convincing the Police Service, not me. It is the Police Service that makes these decisions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr LAMING: I can see that I am getting under the Minister's skin. It was only 12 months ago that he sent around—

Time expired.
