



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 19 July 2000

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (10.11 a.m.): During the debate on the Dairy Industry Deregulation Bill, I spoke on representations I made to the Government on behalf of dairy farmers from the Australian Milk Producers Association. One of the grounds used by the Government in rejecting the Australian Milk Producers Association's proposal was that it contravened section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

I questioned that and engaged the services of John Pike, lecturer in constitutional law at the Queensland University of Technology, to advise me. His advice was that the proposal did not contravene section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I now table a copy of his six-page legal opinion for the benefit of all members.

Since the proclamation of this Bill, it has come to my attention that some dairy farmers are seriously considering reducing their farm operating costs by suspending their herd recording programs and significantly reducing their farm insurance premiums. I believe these two measures will have a detrimental impact on the Queensland dairy industry.

I understand the great pressures that dairy farmers are under at the moment. I ask the Government to consider seriously two minimum measures of financial assistance to Queensland dairy farmers during the next 12 months. The first is that the State Government reintroduces the once free herd recording program previously undertaken by Department of Primary Industries staff. One of the greatest marketing tools we have over interstate milk is maintaining and promoting the high quality of Queensland milk. With State Government assistance in maintaining dairy herd records on the Queensland milk quality and bulk milk cell count, this State Government would be directly assisting Queensland dairy farmers in their battle with cheap, inferior quality milk from over the border.

The second assistance measure I ask this Government to consider is subsidising and maintaining the maintenance of current dairy farmers' farm insurance premiums over the next 12 months. I believe these two proposals are realistic. Whilst some people will raise arguments against them, I simply say to the Government: it can provide this level of assistance if it wants to.
