Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 31 October 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rainfall Projection

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.00 a.m.), by leave: Queensland's traditionally dry winter has exacerbated the dry conditions facing much of Queensland. Twenty-four shires and another part-shire of the state are officially drought declared, but the dry conditions have been felt in many other parts of the state.

I can inform the House that the forecast by the state government's Queensland Centre for Climate Applications offers more positive signs for rainfall over the next three months. The latest QCCA forecast indicates that the probability of receiving median rainfall for the next three months is about 50 per cent to 60 per cent over most of Queensland. I refer to the map that has been prepared by the Queensland Centre for Climate Applications. If we look at the broad band of the state starting from the south-east corner through to the Gulf of Carpentaria and up to the tip of the cape, we see that the probability of exceeding median rainfall is about 60 per cent. Within that broad band, we have areas of the South Burnett, central Queensland and north Queensland where the probability there is around about 70 per cent of exceeding median rainfall. So that is good news for many of our producers who have been suffering pretty tough times. However, the latest long-range forecast follows some good falls of rain across the state last week. The rain was patchy, but it was welcome. For instance, rain fell opportunely for the planting of peanuts in the South Burnett, with the industry forecasting a 20,000-hectare crop in the coming season.

As honourable members would know, QCCA is a joint initiative of the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. It is a world leader in long-range climate forecasting. The rainfall probabilities are based on the latest patterns of the Southern Oscillation Index, or SOI as it is commonly referred to, and sea surface temperatures. The SOI is the index that measures the differences in air pressure between Tahiti and Darwin. The SOI is now in a near zero phase. Whilst the forecast is promising, real relief will occur only when rain actually does fall.