



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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RACING INDUSTRY

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (10.29 a.m.): Once again, the Minister for Racing has misled the racing industry and supporters of Queensland. In response to a petition from the member for Gregory objecting to Queensland's cutback in race meetings, the minister defies logic and the truth to suggest that the government has not cut back Queensland Racing. The minister has said—

People who choose to be involved in the racing industry must not lose sight of the fact that they are in a business, in an industry which depends for its sustainability on the revenue generated from wagering. This is the commercial reality of the racing industry.

The minister forgot to tell the people that the government takes more than a billion dollars over 15 years out of the TAB—or UNITAB as it is now called—and that hardly a bent razoo goes back into the Queensland racing industry. The money is going straight from the TAB into Treasury, and what an absolute disgrace that is. The government is, quite frankly, robbing blind the racing industry.

The minister also talked up the Queensland community racing scheme. This quite clearly does not work. It has not worked. All it is doing is trying to encourage two classes of races in Queensland. In other words, there are professional race meetings and there are substandard race meetings. That is what the minister is trying to pursue.

The minister also talked about the fact that I, as the opposition racing spokesman, did not consider it important to be present when the new Racing Act was debated. I was in this House. I went through the whole debate. I had to go to a speech night at Miles. I stayed here as long as possible. If the minister could not get up and start to talk about issues that she wanted to talk about, that is her problem. The racing industry is an absolute disgrace, and it is simply because the minister was not able to do the right thing by the racing people throughout Queensland.