



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 16 September 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Primary Industries

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (9.52 a.m.), by leave: I am a firm believer in the need for truth in labelling. It is critical that consumers know exactly where products are produced and manufactured. It is critical that consumers know what they get for their money. In the case of the previous coalition Government's inappropriate and taxpayer-funded slogan, "Getting on with the job", the label did not stick to the office of the Minister for Primary Industries. The coalition riding instructions for Primary Industries was very much "If in doubt, lay about".

I knew the coalition was deferring most matters of legislative reviews to the bottom drawer and the too-hard basket. But it was only when this Government assumed office that I could assess just how quiet things had been in the Primary Industries Minister's office. Indeed, all was quiet on the western front. When I assumed office, I was directed to a place fondly known as the back paddock. What I saw there was despondency, mistreatment and negligence. The previous Government had a poor record on primary industries legislative reviews. I spent some time up in the back paddock, reassuring, offering sustenance. Some of these abandoned reviews were just happy to see a human being again. What did I find up there? What did I find in the back paddock? There was the dairy industry review, which was allowed to drag on and on under the coalition. We have finally got the report and I formed a working group to examine the supply management arrangements. This working group will report back by the end of the month.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am finding it very difficult to hear the Minister's statement. I am sure that members at the back would like to hear that statement. Could we please have a little bit more decorum in the House? The Minister will resume his statement.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Also up there in the back paddock was the Stock Act. When it was in office, the previous Government took the Stock Act virtually nowhere. Then there was the animal welfare Act. It had been sitting in the too-hard basket for about a year under the coalition. What about the new native wildlife farming Act? The policy framework for it was completed three years ago, but it was put into a deep sleep under the coalition. The review of the Farm Produce Marketing Act was scheduled to start last financial year. That did not happen. Then there are the crucial amendments to the regulations under the Meat Industry Act, which the coalition stopped in its tracks. While the coalition allowed the review of the Brisbane Markets to be completed, it did not make any decisions. That report was "noted" and released and left at that.

Mr Schwarten: Can it get any worse than that?

Mr PALASZCZUK: It does get worse. Yesterday in this place, the member for Crows Nest who is interjecting at this moment attempted to criticise the Beattie Government for its handling of the report titled Meat Industry at the Crossroads. It is just another issue that the Borbidge Government dropped into the too-hard basket and left behind for the incoming Government to fix up. The member for Crows Nest asked, "What has the Government done about it?" I will inform the House. Of the 22 recommendations contained in the report, the Borbidge Government took only half a dozen seriously. Mr Speaker, have a guess where they left the rest stranded—in the back paddock!

The Beattie Government is taking the whole report seriously—all 22 recommendations. In fact, the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of State Development, Premier's Department and Treasury are jointly looking at a submission to Cabinet that will seriously consider the whole of this report as part of a broad approach to a range of issues confronting the industry. Unlike the previous Premier, this Government is getting on with the job, the whole job, in the interests of Queensland and Queenslanders. The National Party has had three spokesmen on Primary Industries in the space of six months. What primary producers want is a Minister with commitment and not an excuse. They want a Minister who does not just talk about getting on with the job but actually gets in there and does it. Mr Speaker and honourable members—you are looking at him!
