



Speech by

Mr T. MALONE

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Hansard 27 August 1998

WORKPLACE RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (11.59 a.m.), continuing: The Beattie Government does not care about small business in this State; it wants to reinstate Labor's discredited and unfair dismissal laws for small business. Those moves alone will cost jobs. Going "back to the future" simply contradicts the notion that the Labor Government is trying to create jobs.

Under the former coalition Government, Queensland achieved the best job creation record of all States and it was tipped to lead Australia in economic growth for the next five years. Alas, that opportunity is no longer available to this great State, because the Beattie Labor Government is determined to turn back the clock and ruin that enormously positive prospect in its determination to dismantle the very framework that would create jobs. For the many reasons that I have outlined, I strenuously urge honourable members to oppose the Government's Workplace Relations Amendment Bill 1998.

Before concluding my speech, I wish to reiterate that the sugar industry, which operates seven days a week, makes great use of flexible workplace arrangements—something it has been doing for some time. The flexibility in that industry—for example, in the milling and also the cane growing and harvesting sectors—improves the employment prospects of a lot of people in regional areas. For example, contracted haul-out operators are required to work odd hours and sometimes have to start at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to deliver bins of cane to mill sidings. The flexible working arrangements arrived at by agreement between the owners and the people working for them mean that cane is able to be delivered into sidings without a great deal of difficulty. We are finding that those people who wish to work certain hours during the day and at night-time are able to be accommodated because of the flexibility provided by the system. For example, some people might hold down two jobs. They might start one early in the morning and the other later in the day. The flexibility that allows them to do that is inherent in the awards.

Working arrangements can be agreed to whereby there is no impact on the returns to employees. Flexibility in the workplace has always been necessary in rural industry. However, under QWAs that flexibility is set in concrete. Right across rural industries we are finding that the provision of flexibility has enhanced the understanding between employees and employers, and greater numbers of people are able to be employed in rural industries. That is the best way to go. Unfortunately, if we return to the way things were before, the employment prospects of people in rural areas across Queensland will be impacted severely. I am not speaking so much about organised workplaces but more so about those workplaces where there are two to five people and where flexible arrangements have been reached by agreement. I urge all members to oppose this Bill.
