



Speech by

Hon. T. McGRADY

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

Hansard 11 April 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr R. Boyle; Mining Industry Health and Safety Legislation

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: I join with the Premier in paying tribute to Ron Boyle—a great and proud Queenslander, an excellent director-general and a good personal friend.

Last night, I spent some time with Judy and the kids and I offered them the condolences and thoughts of the department, the Government and, indeed, this Parliament. Ron was a fine servant of Queensland and he will be sadly missed.

Just last week, Ron confided in me just how proud he was. He had received a telephone call from the Premier. Normally, directors-general meet annually with the Premier to discuss what progress has been made during the year. Ron, with a twinkle in his eye, said to me, "I just got a telephone call to say that he did not need to see me; he is pleased with what I have been doing." He then said, "You know, some directors-general spend an hour with him."

Ron was very loyal to the department. Over the past 12 months I had built up an excellent relationship with him and I am going to miss him terribly.

In August last year this Parliament passed new health and safety legislation for the mining industry, and this year we will see that legislation proclaimed. Queensland prides itself on its mining history, both in the development of the State and the major contribution it makes to our economy. In such an industry it is imperative that safety be one of the highest priorities for any Government. The industry has to be safe for the men and women who work in it. We can never be complacent about safety. Unfortunately, good intentions do not stop people being injured or killed.

We must take every opportunity to try to ensure that accidents do not happen and we must have an ongoing commitment to safety. The new health and safety legislation contains the most significant changes to mining legislation since 1925 when the present Coal Mining Act was introduced.

With this important framework coming into play, it is vital that everybody in the industry is aware of the requirements of the new Act before it commences. To this end, a campaign has been developed and is in the process of being implemented to ensure that all stakeholders in the mining industry are aware of the requirements of the new Coal Mining Safety and Health Bill 1999 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Bill 1999.

An important part of this legislation is that all persons in the mining industry—or involved with the mining industry, such as manufacturers, contractors or suppliers of services—have obligations. Therefore, an objective of the campaign is to ensure that people in the industry—from those at the production face to those at board level—are aware of their obligations. Presentations have already been made to many hundreds of people in central Queensland at Gladstone, Emerald, Moranbah and Mackay. Other presentations have been made to executive and senior management of major mining companies in Queensland, union safety inspectors, contractors and supplier organisations.

In this way we are making direct contact with those involved and also seeking to cover the widest range of people with the greatest ability to pass on information. Further presentations are planned for northern regional centres including Mount Isa, Townsville, Charters Towers and Cairns. Furthermore, during this month inspectors will hold presentations in the opal fields. We believe that it is

important to cover the whole industry, not just the big end of town. Regional inspectors have and will attend these presentations and have been fully trained to deliver additional presentations as required at individual mines.

The presentation material is also designed to be used as a hand-out and over 600 of these documents have been distributed. The new legislation will go a long way to facilitate safer mines in our State. However, the job will be only half done if people involved in the mining industry are not aware of their obligations. Therefore, I am pleased to say the State Government is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the mining community is familiar with the major aspects of the new legislation.

The Beattie Government is passionate about the safety of our miners and we will continue to make strong efforts to ensure that people can go about their daily work in a safe environment.
