



Speech by

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Hansard Wednesday, 23 November 2005

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.58 pm): Recently we have heard the Australian Labor Party, along with its minions in the union movement, crying poor over the Howard government's proposed industrial relations laws. Tonight I intend to reveal that the industrial relations model practised by the Australian Labor Party is much worse than that being proposed by the Howard government.

I would like to talk about the case of Marcia Courtice, who was recently sacked by the member for Bundaberg. Marcia Courtice had worked as an electorate officer for the member for Bundaberg for seven years and three months, and it seems that she has become the victim of a political witch-hunt. From my understanding, Mrs Courtice was given a week's notice that she was sacked from her position as electorate officer after losing a preselection battle for the—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I draw the member's attention to the fact that the employer is the parliament of Queensland, not the honourable member. There may well be a matter of privilege involved in this. The honourable member is not the employer. I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! I will seek advice from the Deputy Clerk. Having taken advice from the Deputy Clerk, I will allow the member to continue but I advise caution in his comments.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The unfair dismissal proposals that the Australian Labor Party and its union minions have protested about are the same ones that they practise in the electorate office of the member for Bundaberg. This is something that will embarrass government members when they rise in this place to waffle at length about how their union comrades will be made redundant by the new laws.

I would like to inform the House of a bit more background to this story. I will begin with comments made on the public record by the member for Bundaberg. On 19 May this year the member for Bundaberg said—

Today I would like to place on record my thanks for the unwavering support of my electorate officer, Marcia Courtice, undoubtedly one of the best in Queensland ...

As I mentioned, it was not long ago that Mrs Courtice won preselection, with 60 per cent of the local vote to run for the Australian Labor Party in the seat of Bundaberg—something she was brave enough to do in the first place. Nonetheless, having won the support of her local comrades, Mrs Courtice was then shocked to find that the union heavies in Brisbane who play a heavy role in running the Australian Labor Party in this state had overturned the decision of Bundaberg Labor members and decided to install another candidate.

Why was the decision reversed? It is very simple: to install more cronies to help the member for South Brisbane cement her claim to the leadership of this state. The Premier confirmed on Channel 7 Wide Bay that Mrs Courtice was sacked because of the preselection woes. So where, may I ask, do workers stand under Beattie's WorkChoices? Smack bang out of work. The sad state of affairs has been compounded by the fact that Mrs Courtice has been sick through this whole course of events, requiring her

to be in hospital for a whole week around the time of her termination. Yes, she has been sacked on the eve of going to hospital for an operation so she will now not be covered by sick leave.

I remind the House of the fear campaign recently engaged by trade unions, which wanted us to believe that under the Howard government's new laws workers would be fired if they fell ill. While that certainly will not be the case under the Howard government's industrial relations laws—

Time expired.