




Speech by

Hon. Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard Thursday, 17 May 2012

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.17 pm): Tonight the Leader of the House hit the nail on the head. This is a bill to put in place the committee system that is so critical for the daily work of this parliament. Everybody around this chamber acknowledges that the committee process is absolutely pivotal to the effective running of parliament and the effective scrutiny of bills that come before the House.

All this bill does is update the committee system. After taking into account the wise words and advice of the Clerk, we have formulated a system that puts into effect, practically and logistically, a committee system that will deliver right throughout the term of this government. That is an important process. It is a wonder that the opposition cannot grasp that simple nut of what we are trying to do. They are trying to make a mountain out of a molehill with this. We are simply updating the system to ensure we put in place a committee system that we need.

Today the opposition made much of the government ramming through this bill. I can recall that when this parliament resumed after the 2009 election campaign, if I am not mistaken, the first bill that this House dealt with was the Greens payback bill. I recall it was the Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009. That was a bill to pay back the Greens for the support they gave the Labor Party during the 2009 election campaign. Despite the fact that this state was going down the gurgler at the rate of billions and billions of dollars, the first act of loyalty of the then government was to the Greens. That was their first and only priority. It did not matter that people could not make ends meet. It did not matter that people were out of jobs, that children were not able to get a proper education, that roads were not being built and that hospitals were not being taken care of—as long as the Greens got their payback bill through as the first bill.

Mr Hopper: Nineteen seats with their preferences.

Mr McARDLE: I take the interjection from the member for Condamine. It is a bit hypocritical for opposition members to stand here today and claim that we are trying to ram a bill through the House when their history from 2009 proves that they thought, 'We'll forget the economy. We'll forget the roads. We'll forget the infrastructure. We'll pay back the Greens as our first call of business.'

I listened with some interest to the Leader of the Opposition's speech from my room downstairs. It is amazing how they have learnt new terms since the election in 2012. I heard the terms 'democratic process' and 'parliamentary democracy' leap from the lips of the Leader of the Opposition. These are novel and new terms for the opposition.

Mr Bleijie: They are unheard of.

Mr McARDLE: They are unheard of; that is quite correct. They are heralding a new era in the use of the English language from those in the opposition ranks. Two of the members of the opposition were in fact ministers in the Bligh government which, along with the Beattie government, rammed through bill after bill

after bill after bill. They guillotined bill after bill. They cut debate down to the very core to suit their own purposes. So when we hear the phrases 'democratic process' and 'parliamentary democracy' we have to think it is a road to Damascus, that something has happened to turn it all around.

Ms Bates: They are channelling.

Mr McARDLE: They are channelling, I have been told. The Leader of the Opposition said that 48 members of the opposition had only three days experience but were still able to sit on committees, as if their past experiences in their businesses and their lives did not give them the qualifications to sit on a committee and judge whether a bill before the House was justified or whether it should be altered. It appears to me that opposition members believe that the only way you get ahead in this parliament is if you go to school, you go to university, you join a trade union, you join a member's office or a minister's office and then you become a member of parliament. There are no real life experiences there, as opposed to our members of the LNP.

When we look around this room here tonight, we see members with years and years of small business experience and hard work. They have brought all of those years into this parliament, and I tell those members now that every single one of them has every right to be on a committee because they have passed the one test required—that is, they have lived a full life. They have earned the right to pass judgement on a bill. Shame on the opposition for criticising those 48 members of the LNP just because they have sat in here for only three days. What hypocrisy when their pedigree is based upon nothing but working for a member of parliament or a trade union and then coming in here. That is their pedigree and that is what the people of Queensland said on 24 March 2012. That is one of the reasons they were sacked—because they did not understand what went on in the real world outside.

I am getting the wind up here, but I want to quickly comment on the role of the Speaker and of returning dignity and prestige to that office. That office, simply by itself, has dignity and prestige, but those attributes may increase or decrease depending upon the person who holds the office. The current Speaker, who was selected only earlier this week, has those attributes in abundance. In my opinion, John Mickel was the best Speaker I have ever had the pleasure to appear in parliament with. He was a man who had dignity and character. He cherished the role of the Speaker and he understood what it meant. I feel that anything we can do to increase the dignity and respect in that role only enhances the dignity and respect of this chamber in the eyes of the people of this state.

It is with great pleasure that I support the bill before the House tonight. I congratulate the Premier on bringing this bill into the chamber with the clear understanding that it is a machinery bill that puts in place the critical components to make the committee system in this House work effectively so that we can deliver for the people of Queensland what they want to achieve—a better outcome, a better parliament and a better life for themselves.