




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2022

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (8.22 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contribution on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have been in this House for quite a while, and I honestly have never heard a debate where so many members on the opposite side got up and spoke so many untruths, used baseless arguments and made accusations with no substance. They called legitimate unions—like the QTU and the QNMU, whose membership includes over 95 per cent of teachers, nurses and midwives in this state—corrupt and other names. They accused them of funnelling money, which is untrue. It is a disgrace on those opposite that the union-bashing oldies of the past are well and truly alive in this House.

Well may those opposite laugh because their display has been truly and absolutely abysmal. There was not one scrap of evidence and it was like a broken record—over and over again saying the same misleading mistruths in this House. It was honestly quite disgraceful, and I would not be proud of any of those members opposite. On this side of the House, we make no apologies. Just like they did federally under the LNP Morrison government, the primacy in the industrial relations legislation in this state—and federally under the registered organisations act—is a registered industrial organisation. That has been the case in this country for generations.

Some members opposite might like a bit of industrial relations education because, honestly, the debate was so puerile and simplistic and their lack of understanding of industrial relations was absolutely pathetic. One of the misleading arguments which they repeated time and time again was to accuse unions of all sorts of actions. They should take that outside and see how far they get. They have absolutely no courage whatsoever. To come in here and talk like that is an absolute affront and they should all be ashamed of themselves.

The same then goes for employer organisations that are equally covered under this bill and are supporting what is occurring in this bill. If they say it for the registered union of workers, they are saying it for the registered union of employers who face similar disruptive behaviour from a non-registered organisation. I heard a lot of them saying that they charge \$400. How would they know what some of these organisations charge? What we hear from the commission is that as soon as a case needs to be taken—and a lot of them have been anti-vaxxer cases, and not one case has got up in the commission—they take the money, they outsource the advocacy and then those people go in and misrepresent the advocacy they are undertaking to the point that the president of the QIRC has written to me about the disgusting behaviour that is going on at the QIRC.

Mr Lister interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is not in his seat. He is interjecting and he is not in his seat. I suggest that if he wants to interject he goes to his seat and he does so appropriately.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind all members to be in their seat if they want to contribute to the debate. Member for Southern Downs, you have been warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: The president of the QIRC wrote to me about the manner in which they are manoeuvring and who they are representing. They have been saying, 'I'm not an agent. I'm not a lawyer. They're not instructing me as a lawyer.' It is ridiculous. I am fixing it up in the bill and I make absolutely no apologies for that. The employer associations are getting exactly the same thing. They are going out there saying they can represent employer organisations. There is AIG and LGAQ. They are all coming in saying exactly the same thing is occurring.

There are two things you do here. You either say the primacy is registered organisations, which has been the case in this country for generations, or you say it is a free-for-all. You cannot have both. Let me say one thing. I hope I am never around when you are on these benches and you make it a free-for-all because no government in this country, no matter what colour you are—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, please direct your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: No government, whether Liberal or Labor, has ever meddled in that place. The member for Toowoomba North said that there are monopolies. It has been happening federally for generations. Demarcation disputes are the biggest area that the industrial commission settles. They demark eligibility rules, they demark unions which can bargain. It has happened for years. In fact the primary aim of the federal registered organisations act that was under the LNP was in relation to demarked disputes. Let us not talk about the political motivation for that, because we know it was to get the AWU and Bill Shorten. That is what that was all about, yet they come in here and talk about politically motivated bills.

At least I did not make amendments in an act around unions and their constitutional rights to spend their money on political campaigning to find that it was unconstitutional.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members to my left. Order!

Ms GRACE: The member for Kawana did and he had to come into this House, at midnight.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, order! Member for Capalaba, order!

Ms GRACE: It was Jeff Seeney, the then member for Callide, who had to come in and fix it all up because the High Court ruled that it was unconstitutional. They get up and say, 'the most draconian IR laws we have ever had to face'. At least mine are constitutional, which is more than what I can say for theirs. When it comes to the sexual harassment—

Debate, on motion of Ms Grace, adjourned.