



Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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**ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL;
WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**



Mr LISTER (Southern Downs—LNP) (9.31 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate. I have listened to a number of speakers, including the member for Inala, who spoke before me, talking about taking rights away from workers and saying that the Labor Party is the only party which has the best interests of workers at heart. I can tell you one thing the LNP opposition will never do: take away the right of a worker to be represented by the organisation of their choice in the Industrial Relations Commission.

The LNP would never be party to the expansion of nefarious powers such as being able to take photographs in contested industrial environments and not have to erase them. I concur with what the honourable member for Condamine and others before me have said about how sinister that is when we take into account the recent history of militant unions engaging in violence and misconduct against workers who are not members of those unions or who do not toe the line.

It needs to be said that bills like this will have their place and there are advantages—and of course we are supporting them largely, except for some amendments. The Labor government has a gross conflict of interest in any of these matters. This legislation has the effect of enhancing the business of the big unions, and it does so at the expense of maybe smaller unions and certainly at the expense of independent unions that are not aligned with the Australian Labor Party. When I talk about a conflict of interest in bringing this legislation forward, we have to remember that affiliated trade unions, or even those that are not affiliated—

A government member: 'Registered industrial organisation' is the term I think you're looking for.

Mr LISTER: Registered industrial organisations—yes, the club that excludes the red unions. I am a member of a red union—the Independent Workers' Union of Australia. Many of those registered organisations, if not all, provide the impetus for preselections for Labor Party MPs. They dictate who gets to be a minister and probably in what portfolio, and it has been widely reported that the unions that will benefit from this legislation had a decisive, if not the conclusive, hand in choosing who the premier of this state would be.

These organisations stand to benefit from these changes and many other industrial relations reforms that I have seen during this term. They will enrich those unions that provide benefits to members of the Australian Labor Party. The organisations which will benefit from this legislation use the levers of government and their numbers in the House here to pass legislation that benefits their political and financial benefactors and disadvantages the competitors of their benefactors. In any other context—and this one too, or it should be—that is called corruption. I bring to the attention of the House and the people of Queensland yet again that the Australian Labor Party has a gross conflict of interest in any

legislation it brings forward. This is particularly so in the field of industrial relations, where it seeks to enhance the powers, or the profitability, of the big unions which support them financially, politically, directly with donations or in the form of third-party campaigns.

I support the foreshadowed amendments which have been tabled by my honourable friend the member for Kawana, the shadow minister for industrial relations. We all know—everyone knows—that militant unions use the threat of coming on to a workplace with no notice and stopping work in order to coerce an employer into accepting their terms. The amendment provides, in the appropriate instances, for an official to come on immediately, but I think the amendment is crucial—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Pause the clock. Members to my right, there is too much chitchat going on. Despite the member for Southern Downs's steady voice, I am struggling to hear what he is saying. Please keep your volume down.

Mr LISTER: I support the foreshadowed amendments. I again record my disgust at the partisan use of the levers of government to advantage the trade union movement, which financially and politically supports all of the members of the Labor Party over there. If there is a member of the Labor Party over there who feels that that does not apply to them, I invite their interjection. I think I would be more likely to get an interjection from Hansard.