

comment that a contract made by one person is, by definition, not a contract. And that is what you encounter. A young fellow came up to me and told me his boss said this. He said: 'There's your workplace agreement. Just sign there down the bottom.' He said: 'Hold on a minute, don't I get to look at it?' He said: 'You can look at it all you like, but the job you are doing is available under those terms and conditions. And if they're not acceptable to you, then you don't accept the job. We'll have to get someone else to do that job.' So he says: 'My way or the highway.' The bloke just shrugged his shoulders and pushed the form in front of him. The point I am making here is this: if you live in the real world, you know that if you do not have an arbitration commission and you do not have a trade union mechanism for collective bargaining, then you will work for nothing in this country!

All right, the ALP government restored the arbitration commission. Good on them; that is wonderful. But there was a little catch 22. One of the prominent union leaders in Australia was in this place. I said, 'Have you seen this legislation?' She said it was disgusting. I said, 'Well!' And she said, 'Do something about it.' And I thought, 'Well, there's a beauty! I'm an Independent in this place and I've got to do something about it. She's one of the more powerful trade union leaders in the country and she's telling me to do something about it!' But here is the catch 22: yes, you can go to the arbitration commission to get an increase in your pay or change in your conditions—those conditions might be dangerous—but to get that change you have to go on strike. The definition is a 'serious economic loss', which amounts to a strike or a lockout. Lockouts are pretty rare, but when they do occur—that is, a strike or a lockout—they become extremely dislocative for the people of Australia. Immense hardship is placed on the people of Australia if people are forced to go out on strike to be able to get access to the arbitration commission.

We had a very bitter and bloodthirsty situation in Queensland when the lights were turned off by striking electricity workers in a little division of the power industry in Queensland. They would not switch the lights back on and the government eventually acted with a very high degree of brutality, which I think was excessive even though I am ashamed to admit I was in the government at the time. When the lights are turned off, people react with extreme anger against the people who are striking. We should not have in this country a requirement that to get into the Arbitration Commission you have to dislocate people's lives and disrupt and damage the economy. Without collective bargaining we will be back where we were a hundred years ago. I can give you case after case after case of increasingly dangerous operations in industry, mining and everywhere else. People are desperately trying to make ends meet. I do not blame the mining companies

and I do not blame the industrialists or any of the other employers who are desperately trying to make ends meet. What happens in that situation is we get cut back. Overlaid on top of this, the government are flying in foreign workers as well, which is undermining our pay and conditions. This legislation today gives you access to the Arbitration Commission through conciliation without have to go to strike. (*Time expired*)

Bill read a first time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Owens): In accordance with standing order 41(c), the second reading will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Dairy Industry (Drinking Milk) Bill 2013

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Katter.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (11:53): I was listening to Prof. Ted Kolsen, Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Queensland—the most distinguished economics faculty in Australia, with many contenders for Nobel Prizes over the years and many other accolades of which they can be greatly proud—and he said that there were three great shames in Australian history: the way we treated the first Australians, the way we treated the men that came home from Vietnam and what we did to the dairy farmers. I will vividly remember, until the day I die, when Senator Julian McGauran raised the issue that day in the National Party room that I was in. I do not think I have ever been so disillusioned—traumatised is probably the right word—by an event in my life. When it actually came in—I am a pretty tough customer and things do not worry me a lot—I lay in bed that day until 11 o'clock just staring at the ceiling because I knew exactly what was going to happen. When they deregulated the wool industry, we went to a suicide every two months in western Queensland. Thank you, Mr Keating! When they deregulated the sugar industry, we went to a suicide every two weeks. Thank you, Mr Truss and Mr Beattie! When we were going to deregulate the dairy industry, everybody knew it would be infinitely worse.

I hope I am not out of school in quoting Julian McGauran on this, but Julian, as he walked out of the party room that day, said: 'That's it. It's all over red rover for the National Party. They're finished.' I think that seven members left that day. There is no National Party in Queensland; it is the LNP, which is an affiliate of the Liberal Party, not the National Party. There is nothing left of it in Victoria. There is nothing left of it in Queensland—it does not exist in Queensland, actually—and there is not a lot left in New South Wales either. You can thank your current leader because he was one of the architects of the

deregulation of the dairy industry. In New South Wales and Queensland the price for fresh milk, within one day, dropped from 59 cents a litre on average to 42 cents a litre, and this is all a matter of public record: the ABS figures, the inquiries that have been done, every single one of them clearly indicates exactly that figure. That is what deregulation did. I do not blame Woolworths and Coles. They are out there to make a quid and, if they can get away with paying 42 cents, they would be damned stupid to pay 59 cents. If there is social dislocation on the issue, that is a matter for government to address, not Coles and Woolworths—they are not there to be Santa Clause.

So what do you do to fix it up? There were 21,000 dairymen in Australia, and now there are under 7,000. My area had 240, and the last time I looked at the figures we had 42 left. One of the towns up there has the highest suicide rate in Australia. Of course, I am not one to be surprised by that. I knew it was coming down the line for us. I punished myself by going and visiting those 12 or 15 dairy farmers in that first week of deregulation. I do not know why I did it. It was some sort of salving of my own conscience, I suppose, because I was in the party that had done it to them. On every single one of those farms the husband and wife were the only workers there, they did not employ anyone, they got up at 5.30 every morning of their life and went to bed at 7 o'clock at night—they might have a bit of camp in the middle of the day. How would you like to do that? How would anyone anywhere like to live like that? These are the people that were utterly destroyed. We thank the government and the Treasurer very much for calling a debt summit. He called a debt summit because farm debt had risen from \$700,000 per farm to \$1.1 million per farm over the last two or three years and the matter is very critical. Since the debt summit late last year, the figures for last month are \$1.4 million of average debt per farm. We have gone from \$700,000 to \$1.1 million late last year, to \$1.4 million now, and the dairy farmers in Victoria are in open rebellion. Why wouldn't they be?

If they are taking it out on their traditional political parties—the Liberals and the Nationals—who can blame them? In fact, they would be very brainless if they did not take it out on them. One bloke down there at Shepparton said to me: 'You're Labor.' I said: 'Well, I wouldn't like to be Liberal or National Party here. I'm not Labor but—'

The SPEAKER: I am loath to do this to the member for Kennedy but, it being 12 pm, private members' time has concluded.

Mr Katter: When do I get to finish it?

The SPEAKER: Just for the member for Kennedy: in accordance with standing order 41, the second reading will be made an order of the day for the next

sitting. When the second reading comes on, the member for Kennedy will have another opportunity.

Bill read a first time.

PRIVILEGE

The SPEAKER (12:00): The member for Windsor is seeking the call.

Mr WINDSOR (New England) (12:00): The member for New England.

The SPEAKER: Sorry; I was so intent on the dairy bill before; my humble apologies.

Mr WINDSOR: Thank you, Speaker. I take the suggestion of naming a seat after me and will have my family consider it in due course!

The SPEAKER: I had one and it got abolished! So it all happens!

Mr WINDSOR: As required by standing order 51, I rise to inform the House of a matter of privilege which may amount to a contempt of the parliament. The matter relates to the unauthorised disclosure of the report of the Standing Committee on Regional Australia on the impact of fly-in fly-out work practices on regional Australia. The report has been adopted but not yet presented. A report in today's *West Australian* newspaper published the title of the report, information about recommendations and the name of a member who has presented a dissenting report. The committee will consider this matter and, if it considers that the unauthorised disclosure has interfered with its work, I will report to the House if necessary at a future time. Pursuant to standing order 53, I present a copy of the article that refers to the committee's report.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for New England for bringing it to the attention of the House.

BILLS

Public Service Amendment Bill 2012

Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.

COMMITTEES

Gambling Reform Committee

Reference

The SPEAKER (12:02): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House of a resolution of the Senate to refer the advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform.

The message read as follows—

That the following matter be referred to the Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform for inquiry and report by 16 May 2013: