CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into cause of fatality and injury on Victorian farms

Seymour – 14 April 2004

Members
Mr M. P. Crutchfield
Mr B. P. Hardman
Mr C. Ingram
Mr J. M. McQuilten
Mr R. G. Mitchell
Dr D. V. Napthine
Mr P. L. Walsh

Chair: Mr B. P. Hardman
Deputy Chair: Mr C. Ingram

Staff
Executive Officer: Ms K. Murray
Research Officer: Dr V. Koops

Witness
Mr R. Pearce, farmer.
The DEPUTY CHAIR — There now follows a period that allows people in the audience to make comments from the floor. I extend a welcome to all members of the public here today. I advise all present at these hearings that all evidence taken by this committee, including submissions, is, under privilege of the Constitution Act, granted immunity from judicial review. I also wish to advise witnesses that any comments made by witnesses outside the committee hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. If you wish to speak, please wait to be acknowledged by our executive officer or myself before speaking.

You will be asked to come forward, and you will be asked to clearly state your name and address before making your remarks. Please keep your comments brief — 2 to 3 minutes — and to the point. If you do participate, committee members will take note of your comments, but we will not in general ask questions unless we are after clarification of a particular issue you raise. Please note this is a public hearing and that your comments will be recorded and included in the transcript of the hearing, which will become a public document. You will receive a copy of the transcript in about a fortnight, and obvious errors of fact or grammar may be corrected but not matters of substance. Do we have any people wishing to make comments to the committee?

Mr PEARCE — My name is Robert Pearce, and my address is 130 Sanmateo Court, Clonbinane. My involvement in this area has been as a professional farmer, but I have been involved in intensive animal research. I wish to make a couple of comments, if I may. It is obvious that the alternative to increasing regulation would have to be education. In the field of education obviously one has two courses, one being formal education, which meets with a degree of cynicism from the farming community because it has tended be tied to regulation in many ways.

I came to farming from a non-farming background, so I can appreciate some of the concerns of traditional farmers when they are faced with new people coming to the area. I found that a great adjunct to education was the use of mentors. Two people advised me in my early stages. One was, as was mentioned, my next-door neighbour, who was a professional farmer and who gave me wonderful assistance. The other was a long-term professional farmer who was involved in the same area I was looking at. I would like to propose that mentorship be built into education. In my personal experience it has a great deal to offer. I learnt more through mentorship of real practical farm activities, of farm safety and of animal handling and husbandry than I did from any other source. I commend it as an adjunct to any educational activities that are undertaken.

Witness withdrew.