



Speech by

DAVID DALGLEISH

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Hansard 25 March 1999

CYPRESS INDUSTRY, WESTERN QUEENSLAND

Mr DALGLEISH (Hervey Bay—ONP) (6.43 p.m.): During a recent sitting of Parliament, the honourable member for Logan raised the subject of the timber industry in Hervey Bay, which is a mere shadow of its former self since his Labor colleagues bowed to the wishes of the international tree-huggers and listed Fraser Island on the World Heritage register.

Anyone who knows the history of Fraser Island can tell us that the timber cutters were great conservationists. The forests were getting better every year while they were managed by the timber cutters. Then the Labor Government axed those jobs and threw those families to the dingoes. The Labor Government said, "Don't worry, we will provide a compensation package." Naturally, the compensation was a mickey mouse scheme which cost the taxpayer dearly but, once the money was all gone, the industry workers were thrown on the unemployment wood heap.

The mere suggestion that National Competition Policy could be allowed to threaten 2,000 jobs in the central western Queensland cypress industry is enough to strike fear into the hearts of every family living in those regional towns. In an industry constantly under threat from the vocal minority of radical greenies, security of employment is really shaky. The constant uncertainty endured by these families must stop.

The current generation is now making an enormous contribution to regional communities. They deserve better than to be living in fear for their jobs. They deserve better than to go through life worrying about how to put bread on their table. These people work long and hard for little reward. They do not ask for more. They just deserve some security. Their future and the future of rural Queenslanders is in the hands of this Parliament. I urge all members to think seriously about that. Reject National Competition Policy and do not destroy a viable industry just to satisfy an economic theory.

Let us not hear any more rubbish about compensation to help people leave the industry. These people do not want to leave the industry. It has been their livelihood for generations. What about the operator of the general store, the newsagent, the local butcher, the garage and all the hundreds of jobs that depend on the timber workers? I fear that they will simply be starved out and become another tragic unemployment statistic.

The mickey mouse solutions that did not work at Ravenshoe and did not work on the Fraser Coast will not work here. We want jobs, jobs and jobs. We want opportunities that can only be provided by protecting and encouraging our industries and promoting value adding. If we continue to bow to the greenies and the National Competition Policy, jobs will continue to disappear. Careers will be destroyed and Queensland rural families will be ripped apart by financial stress. If honourable members care about rural Queensland families they must support this motion.

In closing, I say that the dung beetles newly imported by the Brisbane City Council to break down dog excrement would have quite a feast if applied to the member for Logan.
