



Speech by

Hon. HENRY PALASZCZUK

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard 27 October 1999

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (6.42 p.m.): In speaking in support of the Government's amendment to the motion, I wish to reiterate that the timber industry and conservation groups signed off on the historic south-east Queensland regional forest agreement. This agreement protects jobs, regional communities and south-east Queensland's native forests. The agreement gives confidence in the future of the industry and its sustainability. A sustainable timber industry provides for sustainable timber jobs. As the Premier said on the day the agreement was signed, this is a win-win for timberworkers, the timber towns and the environment.

That result is in stark contrast to the abject failure of the former Borbidge coalition Government to work to achieve a regional forest agreement. Indeed, as the amendment states, the Borbidge Government should be condemned for its failure to reach such an agreement. It had the time in which to do it, but it did not do it. The former Borbidge coalition Government failed in many areas, but I will focus on the timber industry. Not only did the former Borbidge coalition Government fail to deliver on any form of regional forest agreement, but now in Opposition it is attempting to undermine an agreement which has been applauded by industry. The member for Surfers Paradise was not interested in a workable resolution to the regional forest agreement. The member for Surfers Paradise was never interested in any resolution to the regional forest agreement process. This was reflected in the coalition's time in Government—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. Those remarks are untrue and offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn. They are about on par with the Deputy Premier's performance.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked for a withdrawal.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, in deference to your ruling, I will withdraw those remarks.

This was reflected during the coalition's time in Government and now also during its time in Opposition. I believe that the honourable member for Surfers Paradise is far more interested in politicking than in people; at the end of the day people are the most important commodity in our State. This Government is committed to delivering results to Queensland. We are a Government committed to consultation. This Government has always said that it was working to achieve a balanced outcome that would be in the interests of jobs in the timber industry and in the interests of the environment. The regional forest agreement for south-east Queensland creates hundreds of new jobs while preserving areas of high conservation value.

Another of the failures of the former Borbidge coalition Government in respect of the timber industry concerns the security of resource supply for cypress pine millers in rural Queensland. The Borbidge coalition Government refused to address this issue. Jobs were lost in the industry due to the uncertainty that the former Borbidge coalition Government created. This Government has delivered on resource security for the cypress pine industry. In fact, last week I had the pleasure to officially open a new cypress pine mill in Mitchell. The mill will support 15 direct jobs and more jobs indirectly. Cypress pine milled in Mitchell will be bound for the United States, Japan and interstate. I pay tribute to Nev Collins, his family and the staff of M. K. Collins Industries on the opening of the Mitchell mill, which replaces a mill that was destroyed by fire about two years ago. The State Government has also offered for sale an additional 100,000 cubic metres of cypress pine at 10,000 cubic metres per year for 10 years for the Tambo area. This presents another chance for a new cypress mill to be opened in Tambo. This Government is securing the resource in our rural regions for the development of not only existing

sawmills but also new ones. This is another opportunity for further growth in an industry that employs about 2,000 people in this State directly and indirectly—an industry, unfortunately, that the Borbidge Government refused to help.

Although the issue of cypress pine is separate to that of the south-east Queensland RFA, I link them because the member for Surfers Paradise did so. The member for Surfers Paradise referred to my comments in the Courier-Mail about this Government's commitment to the cypress pine industry when I stated that "this Government is about giving security and certainty to the timber industry". The member for Surfers Paradise sought the same commitment for the RFA. We have delivered on that commitment. We delivered for the cypress pine industry. The Borbidge Government refused to deliver on both counts. The Borbidge coalition Government was a serial failure.
