



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard 14 April 1999

TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (10.21 a.m.): Approximately 689,000 hectares of Crown native forest land is logged in Queensland, presently harvesting 108,700 cubic metres from that forest. The Government's position is that 83,000 cubic metres is a sustainable level. The issue is that, after all the recent research that has been done, it is clear that incorrect assumptions have been used in the modelling calculations to arrive at that figure. The Minister made the point last night that if current silviculture and marketing practices were to continue in the medium term, sawlog availability from south-east Queensland allocation zones would be approximately 80,000 cubic metres per annum.

The current silviculture and marketing is not proposed. What is proposed are enhanced silvicultural management practices for Queensland similar to those in other States of Australia. The assumptions used, therefore, in the original model have changed. The calculations for the model were based on the most negative assumptions possible, which have since been found to be faulty. The Minister should re-run the model and save the jobs and save the taxpayers some money.

The timber industry has been going through extensive research and analysis for logging practices in Queensland and other parts of Australia. The beneficiary is the forest. We all want sustainability, and better management practices have been endorsed Australiawide. The Minister has a responsibility to take on board all information. He is using information that is two years old. There is no need to throw hundreds out of work. The Minister should re-run the model and save the jobs. The Minister is guilty of misusing the figures, guilty of corrupting the professional approach to the RFA by deliberately not recognising——

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a point of order. Those remarks are utterly offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr HOBBS: I withdraw. The Minister is deliberately not recognising modern management that other States in Australia have accepted in their RFA.

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a point of order. Any allegation that I am deliberately misusing figures is false and offensive, and I ask that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr HOBBS: I withdraw. The Minister should re-run the model and save the jobs. There are two professional reports out at the present moment that support my view that what the Minister is doing is incorrect. The model has changed, the figures have changed, and therefore the Minister should be able to use that new data.

Time expired.
