



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Hansard 15 April 1999

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE AND MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (10.20 a.m.): On Tuesday night—the same night that this Labor Government rejected a motion moved by the member for Keppel that supported the continuation of a sustainable native forest timber industry in south-east Queensland—a public meeting was convened by the Monto Shire Council to discuss the regional forest assessment report. At that meeting 400 people unanimously carried a motion of no confidence in the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources because of "an exhibited lack of practical experience and an obvious conflict of interest between his two portfolios".

The people of Monto got it exactly right. They were expressing their lack of confidence in this hopeless Minister that is shared by people all over rural Queensland. Just as the gutting of rural Queensland was the beginning of the end for the Goss Labor Government, so the narrow-minded, destructive agenda being pursued by the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Minister for Natural Resources is likely to be the beginning of the end for this Labor Government.

This Minister should be sacked. He should be replaced with someone who can understand the natural resources issues that are so important to Queensland's rural industries, which are still the backbone of Queensland's economy and Queensland's future. This week the future of a viable, sustainable timber industry in south-east Queensland is being needlessly threatened along with the thousands of jobs and the communities that depend on it.

Last week it was the irrigation industry, with the Minister proposing to steal water rights with no compensation to people who have invested their future in those water rights. Then we had the strategic attack on the rights of freehold landowners to manage their own land—a right for which they have paid dearly. We also had the slur that the people of rural Queensland will never forget when the Minister accused them of breeding dingoes to rot the bounty system and claim 10 lousy dollars for their efforts.

Things have been too tough for too long in the bush. The last thing that rural Queensland needs is a smart alec, Socialist Left ideologist as a Minister for Natural Resources. Welford should be sacked before he tears the backbone out of rural and regional Queensland and destroys more of our industries and our economic base. He is simply a puppet of the tunnel-visioned extremists to whom he owes political allegiance.

Time expired.
