



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Hansard 13 April 1999

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (6.49 p.m.): Tonight we have heard from the guilty people of the Opposition, the people who for two and a half years of Government had their hands on the levers. The member for Warwick goes on about retaining jobs, yet in a Government full of incompetents he could not retain even his own job. You had to be a real dill to lose your job in the Borbidge Government and he managed it all on his own—with no help at all.

This is supposed to be a Commonwealth initiative, yet not one Opposition speaker explained why Queensland has been duddled, why there is only \$10m in this package for Queensland. Let us look at an indicator of how slow the Borbidge Government was in relation to forestry management. It was said—

"Queensland is actively and expertly participating in national initiatives ... to extend the ... criteria and indicators of sustainable development ..."

Further, in relation to forestry use it was said that the department was "providing practical input into the development of Codes of Practice, thus ensuring that the Codes can be realistically implemented". That statement—not a recent one—was made by a National Party Minister on 2 October 1996. That is over two years ago. We saw two years of indecision—two years of nothing.

When the Beattie Government came to office in June of last year, we got on with the job. Within three months we finished consulting the stakeholders and published the code. What code was it? It was a code developed under the National Party Government. We took the steps forward to certainty and sustainability. In other words, we quickly got on with the unfinished business of the previous Government.

We have commissioned more work to take this data to the highest level of accuracy. We have welcomed input from industry and conservation groups, including the greenfield resources options, which were tabled today after a lot of hesitation and a lot of that nervous energy we get from the Leader of the Opposition when he is caught out. We saw it all this morning.

The previous Government had ample opportunity to develop strategies but, just as with the freeze on the capital works program, its indecision in the meat industry was seen in its craven behaviour in relation to the QLMA—its indecision turned the authority to bankruptcy to the point where it even had to sell off its building and its fleet—and in its inability to develop the cruise terminals or to develop a sensible policy on the superstadium.

The Borbidge Government was spellbound, struck dumb by indecision, to the point of high farce with the rhino affair. So it was with native hardwood plantations. The Goss Government through Ed Casey began the process. What did the Borbidge Government do about it? It probably went the same way as the QLMA—bankrupt—not through insolvency but by being bereft of ideas.

Let us deal with the Opposition's motion. Its contradictory paragraph 4 calls for a scientifically justifiable, comprehensive, adequate and representative forest reserve system. Yet tonight we saw a bankruptcy in ideas from the member for Warrego. How many hectares does the member for Warrego recommend for a reserve? We do not hear anything from him because he knows—or he should know—that setting aside even one extra hectare in reserve, or even keeping it the same, will place

pressure on jobs. The Opposition knows it. That is why it did very little about it and that is why it is saying nothing about it tonight.

Paragraph 2 of the motion calls for the retention of all existing jobs. I make no secret of the fact that I would like to see the creation of jobs as new parts of the industry emerge. But paragraph 2 is straight old National Party confusion. It wants the Government to interfere in the private sector to protect the jobs. No matter what a company does—whether it loses market share, whether it fails to respond to a changing demand or whether it takes on new technology or becomes more efficient—the motion asks the Government to keep all existing jobs. In other words, there is to be no growth in the industry—no jobs growth. We should just keep the jobs the same!

The Opposition's motion is a motion of failure, of a paucity of ideas. At worst it resorts to the old National Party tactic: capitalise your gains, socialise your losses. It encourages industry to do nothing because it hopes the Government will come in and sort it out. This is no way to grow a new industry. The Opposition's motion is a recipe for strangling an existing industry.

Time expired.
