



Speech by

Dr LESLEY CLARK

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Dr CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (6.38 p.m.): Indeed there is room for a sustainable industry, but what we are debating tonight is the nature of that sustainable industry and the process that we will adopt. My experience of the previous National Party Government's approach to sustainable industry was that its policy was to log everything until there is nothing left.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr CLARK: I thought that might get a response.

A Government member: That hit a raw nerve, didn't it?

Dr CLARK: It sure did hit a raw nerve, because in the late eighties in far-north Queensland it was very clear what would have happened under the Bjelke-Petersen Government. My colleagues here can remember only too well what would have happened.

Mr Mickel: I remember every day of it.

Dr CLARK: That is right. We knew then that there was not any alternative. If we wanted to have any trees of any size and any rainforest left, we had to intervene.

Mr Mickel interjected.

Dr CLARK: Which member went to Paris?

Mr Mickel interjected.

Dr CLARK: Indeed it was. So there was the need to act. The World Heritage listing was the only way that we could actually ensure that the rainforest in far-north Queensland was reserved, because then there was no understanding of what sustainability really meant.

Tonight it has been very interesting to hear this debate, because I am not sure that members opposite have really learnt. We are indeed going down a route of looking at sustainability, but all too often when they were the Government of the day and now when they are in Opposition, they would not and will not face facts. It is really disappointing to me that, as has been said tonight, when they had the opportunity to do something about this regional forest agreement, they squibbed it. They just will not make the hard decisions. The hard decisions do not have to mean that everyone becomes unemployed. The hard decisions mean working through these issues comprehensively and sensibly.

Just as an illustration of all the hard decisions that members opposite left, I point out that there was this one which they would not really work on. What about water? They know that there was no way that they could let the situation continue with the way that water was being allocated from some of our rivers. They would not accept the fact that we had to consider environmental flows when we were talking about water allocations. No, that was just all too hard. They would not accept the fact that land clearing in this State was occurring at a totally out of control rate. No, they would not accept that. They have left all these really difficult decisions. This Government is going to face them. The member opposite should not shake his head. His Government did that, and he knows that it did.

Mr Welford: Put it in the bottom drawer.

Dr CLARK: Absolutely, a bottom drawer Government. It did not want to face the hard decisions. Instead, what do members opposite do? They come into this House with this debate about this

factional nonsense because they do not want to have a sincere debate about this issue. They would rather just change the agenda to something else.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs will cease interjecting.

Dr CLARK: I do not mind him interjecting. He does not bother me.

I just want to make the point here to reinforce some of the things that have been said tonight. We heard a quote of the previous Premier Borbidge congratulating Aila Keto. Tonight members have tried to denigrate her in this House. The people who were involved in this process know the commitment of Aila Keto to achieving a positive outcome. It is the timber industry that has walked out on this. A letter that I received from Aila Keto states—

"For the past two years, ARCS"—

the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society—

"has sought to work cooperatively with the timber industry through its representative body, the Queensland Timber Board ... Our objective was an agreed solution rather than ongoing conflict over forest use. Last week"—

she wrote to me in March—

"QTB closed the door on cooperation by adopting an industry position that entrenches the hardwood industry in native forests forever, maintains current harvest volumes for the next forty years and introduces silvicultural treatment with the removal of non-sawlog trees to be chipped, burnt as fuel or converted to charcoal."

So they walked out on that process. We are committed to getting a solution that is going to ensure the retention of jobs and the sustainable use of our resources, and that is why I am supporting the amendment to the motion tonight.
