



Speech by

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard 20 July 1999

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.27 a.m.): It has been reported that, later today, some 20 mayors representing 44 communities in south-east Queensland will gather outside Parliament as an expression of concern about the Government's handling of the RFA process.

The simple fact is that, contrary to so many of the arguments put forward by the radical environmentalists, the management of our forest resources in this State has been up with the best in the world. I am aware that, as recently as the 1980s and through the nineties, the expertise of forest management in this State has been utilised by United Nations agencies in terms of foreign aid to developing countries on how to properly manage a resource. But the fact is that some of us—apparently in this place and outside—are intent on closing down an industry so that we can continue to increase imported timber from other countries that clear-fell, which is absolutely ludicrous in the extreme.

The fact is that the jobs of some 1,200 workers and the future of some 44 communities are at risk, and the reality is that if we want to, in this Parliament, we can protect those jobs and we can save those communities. That is the reality. And I would hope that the Labor Government will not feel obligated to Dr Keto in respect of the deals that were done to obtain Green preferences prior to the last election. Because the reality is that, in the whole RFA process, the balance changed when there was a change of Government and the Greens started to call in their political favours.

Time expired.
