



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

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MAREEBA, CHICKEN PROCESSING PLANT

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.29 a.m.): The Australian owned Bartter Enterprises has a chicken processing plant in Mareeba in conjunction with a value added processing plant in Cairns. This Australian owned business generates \$10 million in the Mareeba-Tablelands region annually. It employs 124 workers and provides ongoing business for companies like Ergon and Origin gas. Maintenance crews of mechanics and electricians are an integral part of the processing plants.

Ridleys of Atherton is the main supplier of grain to the local chicken growers. This generates jobs for grain growers, truck owner-drivers and plant operators. The threat to this industry is cheap imported chicken as a result of deregulation. If through deregulation this Australian owned company goes the way of other rural industries, it will take \$10 million from the Mareeba-Tablelands area, causing a domino effect to all other businesses in the area.

There are two ways to prevent this disaster from happening. The first is the reintroduction of import tariffs. At present the wage system is such that rural industries are unable to compete with the slave —

Time expired.
