



Speech by

**Mr L. SPRINGBORG**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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**STAFFING LEVELS, PRIMARY INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.): The latest victims of this government's financial mismanagement are the primary producers of Queensland, given revelations that the Department of Primary Industries has had its staff numbers slashed over the past few years of this Beattie government from 3,911 to 3,241.

Primary producers throughout Queensland should not have to suffer at this time of extraordinary drought and, in some cases, flood and invasion of pests and diseases. This is symptomatic of the mismanagement of this Beattie Labor government. It is following the same trail as its predecessor the Goss government which, when it came to power in 1989, slashed Department of Primary Industries services enormously. Those services had to be reinstated by the Borbidge government and were reinstated by the Borbidge government. For example, the first thing members opposite did when they came to power in 1989 was cut the number of stock inspectors and agronomists in my area. We put the agronomy service back at Inglewood. What did this Minister for Primary Industries do? He took it away again.

Primary producers are reeling because this government does not have an understanding of or an interest in this industry in Queensland. They have become the victims of this government's mismanagement and the fact that it is going broke. While we have seen a 17 per cent reduction in DPI staff numbers, we have seen at the same time a 15 per cent increase in the number of public servants across government.

The Department of Primary Industries has been singled out by this government because it does not care about primary producers and because there is not enough support for the Minister for Primary Industries in the CBRC process. It is about time this government started to put its efforts into protecting and preserving the interests of primary producers in this state. They should not have to be the scapegoats or the ones who are made to pay because this government is not able to properly run the finances of this state and because it is going broke.