



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 March 2017

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Sugar Industry**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.15 am): Last night was a very dark night indeed for the sugar industry in Queensland, particularly for those areas under the control of Wilmar Sugar. Last night we saw this Labor government sell our canefarmers down the drain. In their hour of need—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I know that government members are excited. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Burdekin. As I have said previously, if I cannot hear, Hansard cannot. I might ask the member for Burdekin to start again if members persist interjecting.

**Mr LAST:** In their hour of need, when a viable option to resolve this dispute between Wilmar and QSL was presented to this parliament in the form of legislation, those opposite turned their backs and said, 'We don't care.' Perhaps the most galling comment to come out of last night was that from the agriculture minister when he said, 'This is a good result for this vital Queensland industry.'

Well, I would like the minister to come up to the Burdekin and tell my canefarmers how that is a good result for them. From the calls that I have had overnight and from the calls that I have had this morning, it is a long way from being a good result for the canefarmers in North Queensland. They feel betrayed by a government that has sided with a multinational company that puts profits ahead of people. They feel betrayed that in their hour of need this government deserted them.

Let me reiterate for those on the other side of the House that we are 14 weeks away from the start of the 2017 crushing season and we do not have cane supply agreements in place. Until people have a cane supply agreement in place they cannot harvest their cane. This is a crop worth \$450 million to the Burdekin area alone—a crop that sustains thousands of employees from Sarina through to Proserpine, Ayr, Home Hill and up to Ingham, the Herbert Valley canegrowers. Sugar is the lifeblood of those communities and what those opposite did last night was cut off that supply.

As Dan Galligan, the CEO of Canegrowers, said last night—he was here last night—'There is a high level of anxiety in the Wilmar milling areas as growers watch their crops grow without a contract in place to realise its value as raw sugar.' Can members imagine what those farmers up there are going through today? They are growing their crops, they are watering them and they are fertilising them. They are investing considerable sums of money in growing their crop and they do not have any way to harvest it and market it.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock! I cannot hear the member for Burdekin. Minister for Agriculture, you will have an opportunity to speak shortly.

**Mr LAST:** As I said last night, the LNP will continue this fight with our farmers to have an on-supply agreement finalised within the next month because our farmers deserve better than the way they have been treated by those opposite. I am a proud LNP member. Those on this side of the House will always stand up for our canefarmers.

*(Time expired)*