It is a complete package; you know that and I know that. But you must also understand that, if you destroy the absolute fabric of the RFA process - which is the certainty for industry and environmentalists - you destroy the principles of the RFA process. That is what your decision is about today. You cannot come in here and say, 'I support the RFA process,' and then continue with your amendments because, by voting against the government, you are not voting for the RFA process - you are voting the RFA process down. It is as simple as that. While we can talk about things at the edges, that is what this debate today is about. Ultimately, you have that in your hands. If you are prepared to support us, you will see the certainty and the integrity of the RFA process that you want maintained. If you do not vote with us, you are voting against the process. That is something that you will need to go back to your own members about. *(Time expired)*

«end speech»

process. It is not good enough, with the greatest respect to him, to stand there and say, 'We can reach a bit of consensus and compromise on this and get it through.' You have the opportunity here as a member of the Australian Labor Party to support the government on this and to support your timber workers. It is not about those things at the edges; it is about the basic principles of the RFA process. That is the decision that you guys have to make - whether you are prepared to stand up for and effect your own policy. We are implementing your policy - you are voting against your policy.

There are many people in my own electorate, in the Wombat Forest, who have an extraordinary interest in this matter - whether it is the Forest Protection Society and its local branch president, Debbie Mauric, or the Wombat Forest Society - which is an environmental based group led by Tim Anderson - everyone has a great interest in this. The member for Braddon, the member for Lyons and the shadow minister for forestry and conservation know that the integrity of this process, in relation to both the industry and conservation, is what makes the RFA process what it is - it is a mixture of both. It looks at all those issues. The three main objectives of the RFA - I want to read them into *Hansard* - are:

to protect environmental values and a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) Reserve System based on nationally agreed criteria;

to encourage job creation and growth in forest-based industries, including wood products, tourism and minerals; and

to manage all native forests in an ecologically sustainable way

HANSARD CHAMBER GREEN

«#29»

«start speech»

Mr **RONALDSON** (Ballarat) (1.02 p.m.) - With the greatest respect to the member for Braddon, we are not talking today about things at the edges, about little bits and pieces of minor regulations. We are debating today the integrity of this process. You cannot, on the one hand, say, 'We support the National Forest Policy Statement, we support (a), (b) and (c) and we support RFAs.' The realities are that, if this goes through - if the Labor Party has its way - the utter integrity of this process will be put at risk. It is just not good enough to stand there and say, 'I do care for my timber workers. Do not accuse me of not caring for them.' I am sure that the member for Bradden does care for them. I have never said that he does not, but the outcome of what he is doing today means that he is going to attack those timber workers and their families and their future. This is not about bits and pieces at the edges. It is about the integrity of the process. I am sure that the timber workers in Tasmania would love to read the member for Denison's speech where he talked about constitutional matters - I doubt that is going to be of great importance to them. I will again read to you the comments of Trevor Smith:

> If the disallowance mechanism becomes part of the RFA process, then every RFA will become subject to a disallowance vote and a campaign from those who wish to derail the RFA process. This could see the whole NFPS/RFA initiative of the former Labor Government being completely gutted.

So we are not, with the greatest respect to the member for Braddon, talking about bits and pieces at the edges. We are talking about the basic principles of this

HANSARD CHAMBER GREEN

CFMEU, said:

On the issue of disallowance, I again repeated the Unions position that it does not support this proposal as we believe that it is a proposal that would again take the Parliamentary Labor Party down the road of tearing itself apart over forest issues.

Quite frankly, I am not terribly interested whether the Labor Party tears itself apart over forest industries, but I am terribly interested in the forest workers and the people in regional and rural Australia. He goes on:

In fact the mechanism of a disallowance mechanism was never raised during the ALP Opposition's response to the first introduction of the RFA Bill by Minister Anderson last year.

If the disallowance mechanism becomes part of the RFA process, then every RFA will become subject to a disallowance vote and a campaign from those who wish to derail the RFA process. This could see the whole NFSP/RFA initiative of the former Labor Government being completely gutted.

I am going to stay here because I want to speak on this again, but I challenge people who I respect on the other side of the House to get some commonsense in relation to something that should not even have to be debated today. It is far too important to those people out there who are relying on us to give them a future. *(Time expired)*

«end speech»

Set up amendments in Senate.
7 mean you could by RFA
at will

VP Labor successful

Mr Horne - I can't support this minister.

Mr Tuckey - Why don't you support your timber workers?

Mr Horne - What don't you support my timber workers?

Mr RONALDSON - Let us not underestimate the significance of this debate today. This extraordinary attempt by the Labor Party, against every single person in the process, to talk about disallowance and other motions is just plain nonsense. The member for Reid - someone that I personally respect and admire because we have taken up issues together - simply cannot come into this House and read a prepared speech, prepared by one of his staff members, the great basis of which was to attack the minister. What does that add to do the debate? Nothing at all. There was no talk about the issues, and I am personally disappointed. I want to read from a letter from Trevor Smith, the National Secretary of the CFMEU - the representative of the workers in the forest; the union that represents the workers in the forest and has been very happy to have the minister that you have been attacking stand side by side with them in timber mills throughout Australia.

Surely you do not mean to tell this House, Laurie, that they do not respect the minister when they are prepared to stand side by side with him! He is invited to do so because they know that the coalition government is the one providing a reasonable opportunity for some certainty in an industry that is pivotal in rural and regional Australia. In a letter dated 12 March, Trevor Smith, National Secretary

HANSARD CHAMBER GREEN

«#25#

«start speech»

Mr RONALDSON (Ballarat) (12.32 p.m.) - What a sad day for timber workers and their families. Let us be absolutely clear about this, and let no-one be in any doubt at all, that the member for Lyons has very clearly summed up what his position is. The great challenge for him now is to vote against his party, and I challenge him to do that. The great challenge for the member for McMillan is to come in here and defend his position vis-a-vis his comments to Minister Tuckey in relation to the urgency of this legislation going through. Let us be very clear that what we are talking about today is about the ability of timber workers and their families, and conservationists, to have some certainty in relation to an industry that this nation desperately needs.

We are not talking about an industry that you can package up in a small ball and toss in the wastepaper basket, we are talking about an industry upon which many hundreds of thousands of regional and rural Australians rely. It is not just the people in the forest, it is the people outside the forests servicing them. Those families and those children -

Mr Horne interjecting -

Mr RONALDSON - Now, Bob, you are in an incredibly difficult position because you have not got the intestinal fortitude to stand up for your timber workers and the blue-collar workers that you are meant to represent.