

Extract from Hansard – uncorrected Proof – Tuesday 30th August 2011

[4.17 p.m.]

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) (Bass) - I wanted to start with a matter that [Mr McKim](#) raised but he never completed it. He said he would provide the answer and I think it is absolutely critical and crucial to this debate today but also in respect of the future of the forestry industry. If [Professor Jonathan West's](#) review process finds that only 250 000 hectares, or 300 000 hectares, can be locked up and still provide -

[Mr McKim](#) - You mean unlocked?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - No, I am talking about how much the end reserve will be, not 430 000. If it is going to be 250 000 hectares or up to 300 000 hectares, as Forestry [Tasmania](#) has said that is the maximum that could be locked up, will you support the agreement?

[Mr McKim](#) - We'll have a look at that.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Will you support the agreement?

[Mr McKim](#) - I'm not going to hypothesise and try to put pressure on [Professor West](#).

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - It is not a matter of putting pressure on [Professor West](#), it is simply asking you, 'If you do not get what you want, will you support this agreement?'

[Mr McKIM](#) - We will wait and see what the legislation looks like when it arrives in this Chamber.

[Mr Groom](#) - I think it's fair to say he will do what's in his political self-interest.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - This is not about legislation, this is about the size of the lock-up. [Dr Bob Brown](#) said that no money should flow unless 572 000 hectares is locked up and you have said that in those existing coupes the 430 000 coupes should not be accessed immediately. You said that, did you not? So where do you stand if [Professor Jonathan West](#) comes back and lays before the Parliament only 250 000 hectares, not the 430 000 hectares? Where do you stand?

[Mr McKim](#) - We'll have a look at it when it happens.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - I will tell you where you will stand; this will not be worth the paper it is written on, will it, [Mr McKim](#)? It is not worth the paper it is written on now because we know for a fact that Forestry [Tasmania](#) has said that it cannot provide the resource if 430 000 hectares is locked up. That is why this man here went out last night and carried on hysterically when the Premier said that she was prepared to legislate to 265 000 cubic metres for peeler billets

[Mr McKim](#) - We won't support that.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - The reason you will not support that is that you know damn well that you cannot lock up 430 000 hectares and produce that. You cannot lock that up. [Mr Deputy Speaker](#), you should have the courage to stand up and explain what is going on because -

[Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER](#) - [Mr Gutwein](#), you cannot address me and then ask him the question.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - [Mr Deputy Speaker](#), this man should stand up and have the courage of his convictions if he believes that the IGA is the way forward, which is what he just said. He should stand up and say that he commits absolutely to the independent verification process that [Jonathan West](#) is conducting at the moment and if it comes in at 250 000 or 150 000 or 300 000 then he is going to agree with it. That is what he should do. This is not worth the paper it is written on if he is not prepared to stand up and say that he will abide by the terms of the agreement. This is what we are finding with [Mr McKim](#) and with the ENGOs. At the end of the day they want the maximum they can get and they will not accept any less.

We have the Premier not prepared to call out those ENGOs. They should explain today what their position will be if 430 000 isn't locked up. What is their position? We know what Bob Brown's position is. [Mr McKim](#) is firmly in the frame here now. You are the one that has been absolutely wedged by this because you have stood up today and said that that document is the way forward. Our challenge to you is to say that you will accept what is in this document in respect of the independent verification process, and if [Professor Jonathan West](#) comes back with less than 300 000 hectares then you will support it.

[Mr McKim](#) - If he comes back with 155 000, will you support that?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - We don't support the agreement. That is what this about.

[Mr McKim](#) - But your policy is for 155 000 hectares of reserve.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - No, it is not. You are wrong.

[Mr McKim](#) has been caught out and that is why he went out last night. That is why [Bob Brown](#) went out last night and why [Senator Brown](#) said that he was going to see the [Prime Minister](#) today to say to her that this is not fair, that we are not going to get what we want. You know that, Minister, don't you? You know that when push comes to shove you are leading this industry into another six months of uncertainty because at the end of the day FT's modelling, which has already been peer reviewed, shows they cannot provide the resource.

[Mr Green](#) - What I do know is that I have a bit of industrial deafness and it is getting worse. Tone it down a bit, will you.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Tone it down a bit? In the last seven days I have had three wives on the phone who don't want to become three widows. Three wives are frightened to go the shed if their husband's ute is parked in it because they do not know what they will find. That is what is going on in [Tasmania](#) at the moment and it is not good enough.

[Mr McKim](#) - The IGA is an attempt to resolve these issues; it is not the cause of it. You are wrong.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Well then stand up and say that you will commit today to agree to what [Professor Jonathan West's](#) group comes up with.

[Mr McKim](#) - I may well. We will have a look and see what it says.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Stand up and say it. The bottom line is that we know you won't because it will never be enough.

[Mr McKim](#) - You know nothing about the environment. You want to keep propping up an unsustainable business model which has resulted in 3 000 jobs being lost out of the industry.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - In the last 12 months the statement of principles process has driven people to the point where they are picking up the phone and ringing members on this side, and I know they are probably ringing members on that side as well. They are telling some of the most dreadful stories. You can stand up here and you can use political speak and say that it is not the IGA -

[Mr GREEN](#) - Point of order, [Mr Deputy Speaker](#). I have let the member go on here. The facts are simple that the IGA and the negotiations that have continued have had absolutely nothing to do with the volumes that have been sold or achieved in the forest industry at the moment - in fact to the contrary. The volumes have stayed exactly the same and I would ask the member to refrain from suggesting that to the House and therefore to the Tasmanian people because it is simply not true.

[Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER](#) - It is not a point of order.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - [Mr Deputy Speaker](#), talk to your own agency. They even flagged in their annual report, the document that they released only yesterday, that shutting of Triabunna had a material impact on them.

[Mr Green](#) - We did not shut Triabunna.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Of course the reopening of Triabunna is linked to this.

[Mr Green](#) - It is not.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - It is absolutely linked to this. You know that [Gunns](#) have said that they will not reopen until they get a satisfactory outcome out of the statement of principles process. So don't sit there and say that

it is not linked to this.

[Mr Green](#) - It was shut before the IGA even started.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - The reopening is absolutely linked to this. You know that the reopening of that mill is linked to what [Gunns](#) have said is a satisfactory outcome to the statement of principles process. Have you any faith left in [Bob Gordon](#)?

[Mr Green](#) - Yes.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Well then listen to him. Let us be clear. [Bob Gordon](#), the head of your agency, said yesterday there is no shortage of demand for Tasmanian timber products, yet you will sit on that side of the House, kowtow to them and talk the industry down. Where would we be today, and that is a question you should be answering, if during the last 12 months we had not been stuck around a table supporting that statement of principles process and had been talking about how we could grow the market, rather than shut it down? You on that side of the House know the demand problems by [Gunns](#). One major customer, one major player, has had a problem in its supply chain. You know that. You have the head of your own GBE saying that there is no shortage of demand. Where would we be if we had spent the last 12 months looking at how we could grow this industry rather than shut it down, but you want to step up and tell me that I should not raise the fact that in the last seven days three wives have been on the phone who do not want to become three widows. You lot are complicit in this. You have a set of circumstances here where the Leader of the Greens will come into this place and say that this is the way forward, yet he will not even commit to the outcome of the independent verification process.

[Mr McKim](#) - I am going to wait and see what [Professor West](#) recommends.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - What we have just heard on this side of the House and I am sure what the Labor members have heard as well is that you want to see whether it meets your aims. That is it. It is an independent verification process contained in the document that you have just spent 40 minutes supporting and you cannot even commit to it. It was a fraudulent contribution because this member has spoken about what a wonderful process this has been and how it is going to restructure the industry and take it forward, yet when given the opportunity to say that he will accept the independent verification process, he will not do it. The reason he won't is that we know if it is less than 430 000 hectares, or if it is less than 572 000 in [Senator Brown's](#) case, they will not accept it.

[Mr McKim](#) - You're wrong to make that statement.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - [Bob Brown](#) has already made the statement that no money should flow to contractors unless the full 572 000 hectares is locked up immediately. This is the mess that you lot find yourselves in. That is why we brought forward the no-confidence motion - we have no confidence in

you to be able to take this industry forward and deliver. You are taking the industry into another six months of uncertainty.

[Mr McKim](#) - Well, what's your solution?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - The comments from [Mr McKim](#) today have absolutely confirmed that.

[Mr McKim](#) - What's the Liberals' solution? You haven't got one, have you?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - We have been consistent right throughout this. We have outlined our position, which differs from yours in that what we are about is growing an industry, not shutting it down. You have the minister here who tells me a moment ago that he has absolute faith in [Bob Gordon](#). You have [Bob Gordon](#) out there saying, 'Let's be clear - there is strong demand for Tasmanian timber products'. Well, imagine how much stronger it would be if we had spent the last 12 months working out how to grow the industry, not shut it down.

[Mr McKim](#) - You just want to put more taxpayer subsidies into the industry. It's a failed business model.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - A failed business model? Thanks to you lot!

Members interjecting.

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - The day after this was signed we had two lunatics tie themselves to equipment at [Ta Ann](#), and you were not even prepared to condemn them.

[Mr McKim](#) - You've blamed us for veterans' suicides, and now you're using parliamentary privilege to insult people.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - [Mr Speaker](#), what this man does is effectively cheer them on because he is not prepared to step up and say, 'No, stop - this shouldn't happen'. I watched your mealy-mouthed words on TV the other night as a result of this and I think you pretty well said, 'I support people's rights to protest'.

[Mr McKim](#) - I do - so do you.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - On this side of the House we do not support people's rights to lock themselves to equipment and sabotage businesses.

[Mr McKim](#) - But you support forestry workers bashing up cars and threatening people's lives.

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - You have spent years going to [Japan](#) and other markets tearing down businesses.

Members interjecting.

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order, order! Members should come to order, and that includes the Minister for Education. Please stop interjecting.

[Mr McKim](#) - Just waiting for a positive suggestion - not holding my breath, though.

[Mr Hodgman](#) - He's started again.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - He cannot help himself. He has been caught out today because on one hand he wants to talk up the benefits of the IGA but on the other he will not bind himself to the outcome. Do not be a coward - you should step forward and say that you will accept the outcome. He will not do that because he knows that it may not quite give him what he wants. This has never been about the industry, it has been about what they can get. How can you solve an industry crisis - that this Government has been happy to talk up right through the last 12 months, assisted by you lot - how can you solve those challenges by shutting down supply?

One major company with a problem in its supply chain - there are some demand-side challenges, so what is the brilliant outcome from you lot? 'What we'll do is lock up supply. We won't spend the last 12 months trying to work out how to grow the industry, we won't listen to people like [Bob Gordon](#). What we'll do is continue to talk the industry down, even though the Brittons, the Mackays and the Torenuses are saying they have strong markets.'

[Mr Rockliff](#) - Why not grow them?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - [Mr Speaker](#), you have the most reprehensible set of actions going on here. You have a government that is happy to lock itself in with the Greens simply to retain power, and the Tasmanian people know that. This about a dirty deal between you lot to remain in government. Minister, you know that you are prepared to allow another six months' worth of uncertainty to go on for this industry whilst this deal remains on the table. It is absolutely reprehensible.

The Premier in her contribution said that on this side of the House we spend a lot of time saying no. I will tell you what we are saying no to, we are saying no to shutting down an industry and we are saying no to accepting your work-to-welfare program. There is not one worker I have spoken to in the last 12 months who has said to me they would prefer a payment rather than a job. You are out there saying they do not want work, they want the payment, is that right?

[Mr Green](#) - No.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - You just said you had not spoken to very many people.

[Mr Green](#) - I have spoken to people who have indicated to me that they would prefer that they exit the industry.

[Mr McKim](#) - And that's what they're saying to me.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Every single person I have spoken to, even those who have been hanging on, have said, 'What we want is to work. We don't want to get just enough money to pay out the loan on our equipment and potentially still lose our house. We don't want to be paid out and end up at zero. What we want is an opportunity - we want to work'. That is what people are telling me and I bet they are telling you that. Given the opportunity, they would prefer to work. The last 12 months has been a disgrace because you lot have spent time assisting a process that is all about shutting down the industry, not growing it.

[Mr McKim](#) - Hello? Global markets are changing.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Why aren't we out there in those global markets, then, knocking on doors and working out what sort of product they want and innovating back here in this State to deliver it, doing the sorts of things that [Bob Gordon](#) is saying is possible?

Members interjecting.

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - We are also saying no to accepting a pittance for this industry. [Mr McKim](#) has gone on and on today about the \$120 million, but that will not do anything to support this economy. There is \$7 million a year for the hundreds of small towns that are being affected by this. At a time when our economy is in trouble, a very clear message from this Government should be that they are about growing businesses, not shutting them down, that they want to see growth in industry, not industries being shut down, and that message is not coming through. The Government is denying people that hope. They have given up simply because they want to hang onto power and I think they know full well that by the time we get to the end of the [Jonathan West](#) verification process your colleagues, the Greens, will be more than likely looking to desert you. We have just heard from [Mr McKim](#) that he will not agree to the independent verification process. If ever there was a clear message sent today that this intergovernmental agreement is not worth the paper it is written on, that was it.

This process began on a couple of precepts 12 months ago when [David Bartlett](#) pulled his round table together. We were going to seek peace in our time but the Government has manifestly failed to deliver that. Only last week there was a coupe up near Mathinna where once again people locked themselves to equipment. We have had that terrible situation up at Arnold's Mill on the Tamar there where my understanding is that one of the

people that locked themselves to equipment on that ship conveyor belt could not be seen by the console operator and it was only because somebody on the hard pan pointed out that there was somebody up there on the conveyor that the button was never pushed. Where would we end up, where would we be - and that person for whatever reason thought that locking themselves 100 feet above the ground to a conveyor belt was a good idea - if they had been torn in half? It is just ridiculous.

The Greens have two members in Cabinet, [Mr McKim](#) and Ms O'Connor, who when given the opportunity to condemn this sort of sabotage, this sort of industrial terrorism have not been prepared to do so. It is just not acceptable.

Peace in our time. I think I can make a pretty clear prediction here. If the [Jonathan West](#) process comes out with anything less than 430 000 hectares, what we are going to see is increased activity, increased protests, increased industrial sabotage and [Mr McKim](#) today has indicated that his party is more than likely - in fact, I think he very clearly indicated that he would not be supporting a [West](#) outcome that was any less than what they had on the table now and were demanding.

[Mr Hidding](#) - Big warning to [West](#).

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - At the moment, even when the most significant lock up of Tasmanian forests is sitting on the table, he is still not prepared to step up to the plate and say to those people that would sabotage Tasmanian businesses, sabotage the capital the people have invested, 'You should not be doing that. You should not be protesting.' But he will not and it is a disgrace. What we need as well from the ENGOs is what their views are because I can bet you that they will not accept anything less than 430 000 hectares. [Mr Booth](#), you are here; if [Jonathan West](#) comes back and says that to provide resource security for the industry we cannot lock up 430 000, it is 230 000, are you going to accept that?

[Mr Booth](#) - What are you making up hypotheticals for? You are just making stuff up. You are irrelevant to this debate.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Well, let me not make up a hypothetical for you; that is obviously a stretch too far. Let me just give you a simple factual question to answer: Will you accept the outcome of the [West](#) verification process?

[Mr Booth](#) - I tell you what; I won't be verbally by you and I won't take my riding instructions from you because you are a complete fraud.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - So he will not even answer that question and, Minister, you know that you are marching to more uncertainty, that you are marching to more protests and that peace in our time is not going to be delivered because you can never give enough to satisfy. We know from FT's own modelling, FT's peer-reviewed modelling that there is no way that they can provide the resource security that the industry needs with a full lock-up

of 430 000 hectares.

[Mr Speaker](#), the other thing that was going to be delivered here was a pulp mill. A social licence for a pulp mill, let me be clear, a social licence for a pulp mill. Within two months the ENGOs said that they would not be supporting the [Tamar Valley](#) pulp mill. So the two key issues: peace in our time and the delivery of a social licence for a pulp mill, are not delivered by this process. What has been going on, [Mr Speaker](#), is that you have in the background the Government - and the Labor part of the Government, which I find difficult to understand - running around saying that the industry is ruined.

[Mr Green](#) - We are not saying that at all.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Yes, you have been.

[Mr Green](#) - No.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - Over the last 12 months, you have done your best to suggest – in fact, you have actually stated that markets have collapsed. You have actually said that demand has fallen.

[Mr Green](#) - It has.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - You have said that demand has fallen, yet FT is saying very clearly - let me quote again:

'Let's be clear, there is no shortage of demand for Tasmanian timber products.'

[Mr Booth](#) - Yes, for nothing, you fool. You can give away as much as you want, you can lose as much public money as you want. What is it you don't understand?

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - You said before that you support [Mr Gordon](#), that he still has your support. On one hand you are prepared to perpetuate a self-fulfilling prophecy that this industry is doomed, that there are no markets, and yet the head of your own government business is saying that there are.

Let us get on to Triabunna. The Premier said -

[Mr Booth](#) - Here's the Mugabe of the Tasmanian Parliament wanting to seize public assets - seize private property.

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - She said on Sunday 7 **August** that there was no reason why Triabunna could not reopen the next day.

[Mr Booth](#) - You want to seize private property. Is that the Liberal agenda?

[Mr SPEAKER](#) - Order. The honourable members for Bass and Denison should cease the crossfire and listen to the debate.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - The Premier said that there was no reason why Triabunna could not reopen and it has not reopened. It is linked to the Statement of Principles process and a satisfactory outcome by [Gunns](#), with [Alec Marr](#) going to run it. You can laugh -

[Mr Green](#) - Well, it is laughable.

[Mr GUTWEIN](#) - If the Greens had a strategic plan as to how they would decimate this industry, even [Alec Marr](#) running Triabunna would have been a stretched target for them.

[Mr Green](#) - Yes!

Time expired.