

PASTORAL LEASES — RENEWAL

249. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Lands:

I have a supplementary question. I refer to reports put out by the Department of Agriculture and Food that state that in the southern rangelands, only 15 per cent of leases—that is, 46 of 296 leases—will be viable within the next five years, whereas in the Pilbara, 74 per cent are non-viable leases. They will not be viable in the next five years; we cannot make them viable in the next five years.

Mr V.A. Catania: Who said that?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is in Department of Agriculture and Food reports. Why is the minister not weeding out the non-viable pastoral leases?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

I take it that the position the opposition is putting to me is that, on the basis of a Department of Agriculture and Food report about viability, we should shut down those pastoral leases. Is that the position of the opposition?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, you are not involved in this question.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I am sure the member for Kimberley will be absolutely wrapped to hear the position of the opposition that, on the basis of a Department of Agriculture and Food report on the viability of the pastoral industry, those pastoral leases should be shut down or weeded out. We should be weeding them out, in the words of the opposition. I am sure the member for Kimberley is really impressed with that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the first time. Are you finished, minister?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: No, I am not. The other issue that emerged in 2011 was the live cattle trade to Indonesia.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: If one thing impacted upon the viability —

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I call you to order now for the third time.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: A question was asked of me about viability. If one thing impacted on the viability of pastoral leases, it was the decisions that the former federal government made on those very issues, on the back of what has been —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Maylands, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: On the back of only a very short time in government, the federal coalition government signed a free trade agreement with Japan, which has opened up a raft of agricultural opportunities that were not even on the Labor Party's agenda when it was in government. It is not for government to make a decision about viability; it is our job to open up opportunities in pastoral areas, and that is what we will set about doing.