

WATER SUPPLY - POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

58. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) How important is political leadership to addressing the water supply needs of Western Australia?
- (2) Where is there clear evidence of that leadership delivering greater security of water supply?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I cannot understand why we end up with an avalanche of comments when not one word has been spoken by the minister. The member for Cottesloe may think it is funny; it is appalling.

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Darling Range to order for the first time.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I do not know why members opposite should be so jumpy about leadership in water when, from the Prime Minister down, people recognise that Western Australia has shown clear leadership in a number of areas, regardless of whether it involves major new resources, for which Western Australia has been recognised as doing something, including the Kwinana desalination plant.

Mr P.D. Omodei: The state is short of water now. If you do not bring on the south west Yarragadee project, you will be short of water now.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will take the Leader of the Opposition's interjection because the point I am making is that on this side we have leadership and the Premier has shown leadership. Yesterday, when I raised the issue of how silly is the idea of bringing water from the Kimberley, the Leader of the Opposition had to support the member for Cottesloe. It does not matter how stupid the idea is, we find no leadership from the Leader of the Opposition on water. He will tell people that he was once Minister for Water Resources. If I had been a Minister for Water Resources with his record, I would not want people to know about it.

Mr P.D. Omodei: You do not know what you are talking about, as usual.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The point is very clear. On this side there has been leadership. When it comes to the Leader of the Opposition on water, standards -

Mr P.D. Omodei: I will stack my credibility against yours any time.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Let us look at the Leader of the Opposition's standards. What will he do about Hon Anthony Fels?

Mr P.D. Omodei: What does that have to do with water?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: What will the Leader of the Opposition do about him?

Mr P.D. Omodei: I am stacking my credentials against yours. What does that have to do with water?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: What will the Leader of the Opposition talk about in terms of leadership? The special report of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on a matter of privilege was brought down yesterday. Page 9 of that report states -

It seemed to be known by the CCC that Hon. Anthony Fels had approached AMEC to discuss the proposed inquiry after that Committee meeting.

It is a suggestion in a report to the Legislative Council that Hon Anthony Fels breached privilege by taking that information to a committee.

Point of Order

Mr J.H.D. DAY: My recollection is that this question is about water supply. It has nothing to do with upper house members of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: I am hard pressed to think how that part of the minister's answer is connected to anything the question referred to. Perhaps we should go back to the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The question is about leadership on water and, given the interjections of members opposite, I thought it appropriate that I use the most recent example of the lack of leadership opposite. It relates to a current issue involving Hon Anthony Fels. A report tabled yesterday indicated that he had potentially breached privilege and we have the transcripts from the Corruption and Crime Commission that show that he knew -

The SPEAKER: I understand that the minister does not agree with me. However, I ruled that the minister shall not mention that any longer and get to the answer or I will sit him down.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: There is clear evidence that on this side there has been leadership on matters relating to water and on the other side there is no sense of leadership at all.