

RESOURCES SECTOR — EXPLORATION — DRILLING POLICIES

238. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I ask a supplementary question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sit down, please. I do not want the wall of noise.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The minister is saying that he is going to continue with all the same policies that have seen a 55 per cent reduction in drilling expenditure in this state—as Albert Einstein said, “Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result”. Is that the minister’s plan for the future of this state?

Point of Order

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Mr Speaker, I refer you to standing order 77(1)(a), which states that questions should not contain extracts from newspapers or books, or quotations. The member for Cannington is quoting Albert Einstein and I would ask you to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Answer the question, please.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE replied:

I thank the member for Cannington. He is clearly not understanding. This government is a friend of the mining sector. I have explained to the member for Cannington that we have depressed commodity prices and a tight capital market. That has impacted on exploration and mining in this state. All of us accept that. This state government is continuing to do what is working for that sector, member; and if it is working for that sector —

Mr W.J. Johnston: It is 55 per cent down!

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: If the member can get out there and help me prop up commodity prices, I am right there with him. But we know we cannot do that.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington!

Mr S.K. L’ESTRANGE: This government will continue to work on the excellent projects, through the Department of Mines and Petroleum, to progress mining and exploration in this state. I support the Department of Mines and Petroleum’s initiatives, and of course we will continue to review those initiatives and look for new and exciting opportunities to enable the exploration and mining sectors to be prepared for the next commodity upturn so that we, as a Liberal–National government, can grasp that opportunity for the benefit of Western Australians and all Australians.