

LIQUOR, HOSPITALITY AND MISCELLANEOUS UNION — CAMPAIGN TACTICS

299. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Premier:

I refer to comments I made in this house last Wednesday relating to a campaign against Liberal Party members of Parliament by the Labor Party's largest election campaign donor, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Albany!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: — for the subsidisation of private contract cleaners' pay.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Joondalup!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The day after I made comments on this issue, this union used intimidatory campaign tactics to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I want to hear only one person in the house at the moment, and that is the member for Jandakot. Members both to my right and my left will desist from talking during the question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The day after I made comments on this issue, this union used intimidatory campaign tactics to target my wife at home by parking its campaign trailer across my driveway while this house was sitting. Can the Premier outline to the house what the government believes are acceptable standards for political campaigning?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question. I think it is fair to say that the member for Jandakot is a member who is hardly likely to shy away from a political stoush. However, there are conventions with respect to public life and particularly with respect to this Parliament. All of us can no doubt think of examples where members of our family, whether it is a wife or husband, child or relative, can be approached, criticised or even personally attacked because of the role that we play. Probably every member has or will have an experience of that nature. We, the people in this chamber, are public property in a sense. We have voluntarily—of our own choice—taken on public office. Therefore, we are, in a sense, fair game. We are accountable for all that we do publicly and, I must say, all that we do privately. However, the longstanding convention has been that that stops with members of Parliament; it does not extend to their wives and it certainly does not extend to their children. With respect to the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, we are not talking about an organisation that is ill-informed or lacking in experience; we are talking about a longstanding, large organisation representing many thousands of employees that, quite legitimately, can take up its cause for better pay and conditions for its members. The union can lobby, have protests, do whatever—that is a democracy. However, a line has to be drawn. What happened, although it was not particularly intimidatory—the member for Jandakot is not claiming that—was done by a union whose head, Mr Dave Kelly, also happens to be vice-president of the Labor Party. We are not talking about someone who is ignorant in political matters and of what is correct and incorrect. For them to target the wife of a member of Parliament is highly inappropriate. It is highly inappropriate! And for them to do so —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I urge the member for Collie-Preston to tone it down just a little, please. It would be appreciated, and I understand.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: I formally call the member for Collie-Preston for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It might be that in the heat of the moment an inappropriate comment or action might occur, but what we are talking about is a planned, premeditated approach by a major union in this state —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Albany!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: — whose head is vice-president of the Labor Party—someone no doubt with his own political ambition—that has deliberately gone out and used the internet to target the wife of a member of Parliament. If members look at this photograph, they will see that the union blocked the access of the vehicle of the member's wife to the house. Some things need to be above politics, and the spouses and children of members

of Parliament and their private residences are not fair game; they are not targets. I hope that Mr Kelly listens to what is said in this place. I hope that he will have the decency to apologise to the member for Jandakot and his wife. I hope that Mr Kelly and the miscellaneous workers' union also will have the decency to immediately stop this campaign. They can target me and anyone on this side of the house, but they should not target the families of members of Parliament. I conclude with this comment: if the miscellaneous workers' union and Mr Kelly continue with this action, they can expect to have no relationship with this government.