

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM — COMMENTS BY PETER REITH

477. Hon JON FORD to the Minister for Commerce:

- (1) Does the minister agree with the comments made by Mr Peter Reith and reported in today's edition of *The West Australian* that Western Australia has one of the most overregulated pro-union state industrial relations systems?
- (2) If yes to (1), what changes does the government intend to introduce to address this?

The PRESIDENT: The Minister for Commerce on whatever aspects of that question relate to his portfolio.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for his question.

- (1)–(2) I do not have the newspaper to hand, but I believe that I saw a story to that effect this morning. The Western Australian government decides appropriate policy for labour relations and other matters that affect Western Australia, and we do not require the advice of those from other places reported in an august journal like *The West Australian* or by any other medium. The Western Australian state government is committed to maintaining and promoting a harmonious and efficient labour relations scene in Western Australia and I believe that we are delivering that and it is our intention to continue to do so. Any suggestion, I might add, by possibly even affiliates of the honourable member that he might have been hanging out with on the weekend, that we have any agenda for a return to WorkChoices, or anything resembling it, is absolutely refuted, and I thank the honourable member for giving me the opportunity to state that clearly to the Parliament so that the next time one of the Labor Party's union affiliates starts using its members' money to start a political scare campaign, the honourable member can set them right about that point.