

FREMANTLE PORT — LIBERAL PARTY VISION

228. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Minister for Transport:

My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport because he was feeling so unloved!

Why has the minister abandoned the vision for the port of Fremantle that he released on behalf of the Liberal Party on 18 December 2007?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for his question and for making me feel loved and considered!

Hon Peter Collier: Take note, Ljil!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes; and a few more.

Hon Ken Travers: She makes you loved every day, and you love it!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, if I may, there is blushing occurring!

Hon Ken Travers: You're disappearing into your chair, minister.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If members want to kiss and make up, they should go outside and do it! We will hear the answer, I think, to the question.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I will be staying here if that is the game!

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The vision for the port of Fremantle contemplated the future of container operations and whether they should be located in the inner harbour or shifted out of the inner harbour to another location; most likely the outer harbour or the Cockburn Sound part of Fremantle port. That was in recognition of the finding that typical late nineteenth century, harbour mouth, middle of urban area ports that exist around the world are increasingly moving from such locations to meet the demands of the maritime technology of today. I am referring to locations such as the middle of urban areas, with inadequate transport links in river mouths that need to be dredged and maintained and so on, in favour of modern facilities with deepwater, dedicated freight transport links and so on.

Alas, the reason why that is not current Liberal Party policy is, first, that it was about three leaders ago and there has been a bit of water —

Hon Ken Travers: It was only in 2007!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes; we go through them pretty quickly from time to time!

Hon Ken Travers: Are you predicting another change soon then?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No; we have had enough for the present and we are doing very well. However, what about the Labor Party?

Hon Ken Travers: So it is just Treasurers you'll turn over from now on?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Please do not interject. This concerns the seat of Fremantle, which I know members opposite feel very upset about.

The fact of the matter is that prior to coming to government and having the resources of government and having assessed the position that we are at now in 2010, it soon became apparent that the time for examining and more closely pursuing the most desirable option has passed us by. It has passed us by for a couple of reasons. One reason is that the decision to pursue that line needed to be made about six or seven years ago, and at that time we did not have a government in this state that was capable of making those sorts of decisions.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: We subsequently found that none of that work had been advanced sufficiently and the options were therefore not available. That is why we have some challenges ahead. But the fact of the matter is that for the foreseeable future—I would say at least 30 years—the inner harbour will remain a container port and indeed its throughput will double. That is why we are finding that we are having to invest because the options are simply not there in the time frame that would be suitable for the needs of Western Australia to do anything else.