

ELECTRICITY — OUTAGES

747. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Where do you go now?

Dr D.J. HONEY: Not to you.

Is this not just a desperate attempt on the minister's part to cover up his failures to provide sufficient electricity to households this Christmas?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

The problem with these prewritten questions is that opposition members do not listen to the answer. I remind members of what we used to do when we submitted our questions to the tactics group; we would write "supplementary depending on answer". We would listen to the answer and then ask the supplementary question. We would not pre-prepare a supplementary regardless of the answer.

This is the end frame from the TV ads that used to be run when the Liberal Party was in government.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Power prices have almost flatlined. They have gone down over the last three years compared with a 97 per cent increase when the Liberal Party was in government. It has flatlined under us; there was a 97 per cent increase under the former government. Those states that followed the ridiculous idea of privatisation are having a 57 per cent increase in their electricity costs this year and next year. If members want to know how not to run an electricity system, talk to the Liberal Party. If members want to know how to have a disaster, talk to the Liberal Party. Remember Hon Dr Mike Nahan said in this chamber that the former government was planning to import coal from Indonesia. That was in the energy market review written by Peter Kerr. Do not forget those things. Also, do not forget that there was this massive piece of legislation, which fortunately never passed the Parliament and which would have got rid of our capacity market here in Western Australia and given the east coast control over our electricity system. Thank God for the inability of the upper house, under Hon Peter Collier's leadership, to pass any legislation because we would have had to unwind what would have been a disaster for Western Australian energy consumers.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.