

ESPERANCE PORT — TRANSPORTATION OF BULK NICKEL

122. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Transport:

As the question is in six parts, I hand over a copy to the minister.

- (1) Can the minister advise whether in his role as Minister for Transport he has carriage of the issues affecting the transportation of bulk nickel from the Esperance port?
- (2) Does the minister support the Premier's view that bulk nickel should be transported from the Esperance port?
- (3) Is the minister aware that Hon Wendy Duncan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development; Lands; Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, does not support the transport of bulk nickel through the Esperance port?
- (4) Is the minister aware that the Esperance Port Authority does not support the transport of bulk nickel?
- (5) Will the minister direct the Esperance Port Authority to proceed with the transportation of bulk nickel?
- (6) If no to (6), what action does the minister propose to take in relation to this impasse?

Hon Ken Travers: Can *Hansard* record silence?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The minister has been asked a very lengthy question without notice concerning, I take it, his transport portfolio.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I am thinking of the best way that I can assist the honourable member on this matter. I will probably provide some more advice to the house in the next day or so anyway. However, for now I can either give a detailed response about the many issues he has raised or, rather than burden the patience of the house, endeavour to respond to this six-part question succinctly.

Hon Ken Travers: I am prepared to continue my remarks.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: My friend the honourable member is demonstrating how out of touch he is with the feelings of the rest of house.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The answers to the six questions are as follows —

- (1)-(2) Yes.
- (3) That remains to be seen.
- (4) That may be based on an incorrect supposition by whoever drafts the questions for members opposite.
- (5) I will be advising the house about that matter, probably within the next day or so.
- (6) Over the past few weeks, a number of people, including me, Hon Wendy Duncan, the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Environment and one or two others, have been constructively engaging with the Esperance port, the Esperance community and the nickel export industry. This stands in contrast to the hands-off, it-is-all-too-hard attitude of the former government. We are now moving to address the questions that arise in Esperance over the export of bulk nickel. As a government, we intend to do what we are there to do; that is, to govern, and that includes making decisions to find a way forward—something the former government was having a little difficulty doing.