

OSCAR COMPUTER SYSTEM, GOVERNMENT INACTION

**391. Mrs EDWARDES to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to his answer in this place on 12 June in relation to concerns raised about the OSCAR computer system. I quote -

The points that Mr Read made have not been sustained by those independent authorities.

Given that the Ombudsman has now resigned following the damaging findings of the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards and the State Supply Commission, will the Premier advise -

- (1) Why he did not take any action on the serious concerns raised by Mr Read?
- (2) Is it true that a senior member of the Premier's staff attempted to manipulate the media in relation to this issue by drawing into question Mr Read's state of mind?

**Dr GALLOP replied:**

- (1)-(2) Let us look at the facts. Under the previous Government, issues were raised in relation to the expenditure of money in the Ombudsman's office. The issues were partly examined by the Auditor General and by the then Department of Contract and Management Services. Some of the issues in relation to the whistleblower's employment went through the industrial processes. As a result of that, Mr Read finished up working in another department and nothing was done about the practices in the Ombudsman's office. Under the Labor Government, the issue was raised and the State Supply Commission looked at it as did the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards. I must correct the statement by the member for Kingsley that no action was taken, as it is not true. I wrote to the Auditor General requesting him to look into the matters. Did the Leader of the Opposition do anything about the issues? Did he write to anyone about them? Did he ask any authorities to look into them?

Mr Barnett: I met with Mr Read.

Dr GALLOP: He did nothing. I wrote to the most important accountability officer in the State, who was currently looking into the issue.

Mr Barnett: The Premier did nothing.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition should retract that statement. I took advice on what happened under the previous Government and I was told that the matters had been resolved. I did not leave it there; I wrote to the Auditor General and accountability organisations in government: the State Supply Commission and the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards looked into it. After they reported to me, action followed. There is a real difference between the previous Government and the current Government. The former minister, the member for Hillarys, might tell the House what he did about it when he was the minister responsible for the Department of Contract and Management Services. Members on the other side of the House who have some responsibility for this matter can tell the Government what they did when they were in government. It is clear for all to see that, under the current Government, matters of concern will be investigated as they were -

Mr Cowan: He was moved sideways. They wanted him moved sideways - they got what they wanted.

Dr GALLOP: What is this talk about moving him sideways? The member for Merredin should repeat that comment.

Mr Cowan: The Premier must have heard me.

Dr GALLOP: The member should say it again.

Mr Cowan: The Premier wanted to get rid of the Ombudsman.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: This is fantasy land. The assumption by the member for Kingsley that no action was taken is wrong. Action was taken. The statement by the member for Merredin is from cloud cuckoo land. The Government took action, it received the results of that action, and accountability followed. Under the Labor Government, the matter was investigated and action followed. Under the former Government, nothing happened. That was always the case for accountability in this State.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I call the member for Merredin to order for the first time.