

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS - CONSIDERATION

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Hon George Cash) in the chair.

Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges - Eighth Report - Matters Referred to the Committee and Other Miscellaneous Matters

Resumed from 13 September.

Motion

On motion by **Hon Kim Chance (Leader of the House)**, resolved -

That the report be noted.

Premier's Reading School of the Year - Statement by Minister for Education and Training - Motion

Resumed from 13 September on the following motion moved by Hon Peter Collier -

That the statement be noted.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I made a few comments a couple of weeks ago on this ministerial statement and I will make a few more comments today. I say at the outset that the opposition is extremely supportive of public education in this state, just as it is supportive of private education and Catholic education. We want good outcomes for all students in all sectors of education, and we will continue to provide that support for the public, private and Catholic education sectors. As I said in the few comments I made two weeks ago as shadow Minister for Education and Training, I am extremely supportive of any program that promotes reading. I was delighted to read this ministerial statement and I will make a few comments in a moment about the schools involved in this program. As I mentioned previously, I would like some clarification from the minister on the criteria for the Premier's Reading School of the Year. Perhaps the minister will provide that for me a little later. I am also aware that the Premier's Reading School of the Year is a program for public schools. That is fine; I do not have a problem with that at all. I am aware that similar programs have been adopted in the private sector and in Catholic education. I know for a fact that Scotch College had a very successful reading promotional program and reading bee that went right through years K-7, and we also encouraged students to participate in the program in the senior school. I know, as a former house head, that the boys got right into the reading bee, particularly those in year 8.

I was delighted to read in the ministerial statement that there were 16 finalist schools and that of those 16, eight were country schools. That in itself is worthy of comment. What is even better is that the top three finalists were country schools, which is terrific. Narrogin Primary School and South Hedland Primary School were highly commended. Ngalapita Remote Community School was the winner of the Premier's Reading School of the Year. That, in itself, is an outstanding outcome. Ngalapita Remote Community School is in the Kimberley. The main language of Ngalapita is Kriol. From the ministerial statement and also some research that I have done, I have found that the school adopts basically a whole-of-community approach. The students in the junior primary school learn to read and write in Kriol, and then in standard Australian English. I add my congratulations to the minister's to Ngalapita Remote Community School. I was delighted to hear that the minister took time to visit the school. Perhaps in her response she will let us know how that visit went. I also recognise the efforts of the entire Ngalapita community, the community leaders, the principal, Roy Boyd, all the Department of Education and Training officers, the parent and community volunteers and of course, most importantly, in this instance the 21 students of the school itself. Quite frankly, this ministerial statement and its contents are symbolic of the role of community schools, particularly country and remote primary schools where a holistic approach is taken that involves the whole community; that is, parents, community members and in some instances the business community. Quite frankly, primary schools are the heart and soul of communities, particularly as I said, in rural and remote Western Australia. I congratulate all the schools that participated in the Premier's Reading School of the Year. I particularly congratulate the 16 finalist schools and, most importantly, the Ngalapita Remote Community School. Congratulations!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I thank the honourable member for his contribution. The Premier's Reading School of the Year is indeed a very good initiative. It is an annual event that acknowledges the significant efforts undertaken in public schools to support the reading achievements of students. I was very pleasantly surprised that the Ngalapita Remote Community School was chosen for this award, particularly as Kriol rather than English is the students' first language. That means it takes an additional effort for the students to achieve a proficient level of speaking, reading and writing English. It is interesting how the school goes about doing that. The teachers encourage the students to write their own stories so that they continue to develop their language. If

there are two things the students of Ngalapita love doing, it is writing and illustrating books, and sharing them with the rest of the class so that they can improve their proficiency in the English language. I was rapt to go to the Ngalapita Remote Community School. It was a special occasion for the children, and so I took it upon myself to take something special for the students. The school received a cheque but we also gave the students a box of picture books and reading books. The kids warmly welcomed the books. They were very excited about them and received them with great enthusiasm.

Hon Peter Collier mentioned the criteria for the awards. The award is given to a public primary school that can demonstrate the best improvement in the reading skills of its students. The award has a strong equity focus and recognises that schools have different starting points for the students who achieve positive reading outcomes. The school that wins this award must demonstrate exceptional value adding to the reading achievements of its students. It is not necessarily a matter of giving the award to the school that achieves the highest overall levels in reading. Each student must try his best and improve on his best performance. The nominated schools are required to support their nomination with compelling evidence of improvements over the preceding 12 months. That evidence may include a compilation of data drawn from a range of sources, including LiteracyNet, outcomes and standards framework judgments, West Australian literacy and numeracy assessment data, monitoring standards in education results, library borrowing statistics and surveys of students' reading participation. It is not done flippantly; it is a matter of the people involved in the selection process trying to identify to the best of their ability the very legitimate indicators of improvement. Parent and community involvement in the school reading initiatives is also included. A great thing about visiting the Ngalapita students is that the whole community turns up, which is lovely. It is great to see that level of community support for the school and there is no doubt that that level of community support impacts on the educational outcomes of the students.

It is important to put on the public record that each of the district directors was asked to nominate one public primary school within the district that had made a significant improvement in the students' reading. This process ensures that a fair proportion of schools from the small and large and city and country districts are nominated. Each of the nominated primary schools is invited to substantiate its nomination in a submission to the Department of Education and Training. An expert selection committee is then set up, which is established by the department to evaluate the submissions. The committee then makes a recommendation for the Premier's Reading School of the Year Award. The award is valued at \$5 000, and that money is often spent by the winning school on additional library resources and reading material. The quantum of money is probably a secondary consideration. The competition is valuable because it encourages children to read. There is no doubt that the winning school has much to be excited about and can celebrate its achievement, which Ngalapita did.

In light of the fact that the government is undertaking a literacy and numeracy review, there is no doubt that the three Rs are fundamental to education. They always have been and will always continue to be. If students read earlier and are confident about their reading, they will develop a love for reading. If they do that, much of the other work they undertake in their day-to-day school lives will be much easier to handle. Some students have difficulty reading because of a lack of phonological testing. Therefore some students are unable to sound out words properly or to put sounds together to make words. If these problems are not picked up, they can impair a child's reading ability and language development, which continues to act as a hindrance to the child's educational development. Initiatives which improve students' reading abilities and which help them aspire to higher goals are a good thing. Everything I have seen about how this initiative works on the ground indicates that this is one of the many valuable programs aimed at improving the literacy and numeracy of Western Australian schoolchildren.

Question put and passed.

Standing Committee on Legislation - Second Report - Annual Report 2005

Resumed from 14 March.

Motion

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I move -

That the report be noted.

As the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I will make a couple of comments on the 2005 annual report of the committee. I draw members' attention to the relatively short period of activity on which the report reports, which was only a four-month period from August to December. This committee superseded the previous committee of the same name, which also existed for three months last year. However, during that period no matters were referred to it. As members can see from this report, the committee received only a small number of referrals. In the context of the history of this committee and its predecessor over the past few years, it

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was a relatively quiet year for the committee. The report is a brief summary of the bills that were referred to it. As the report points out, members of Parliament who sit on those committees are given an opportunity to deal with bills in more detail and to report the committee's findings to the house. Importantly, committees enable a process that allows for the mediation of different political views, as is mentioned in the report, and most importantly, they allow the public to provide input into proposed legislation.

Before I say anything more, it is worth noting that the committee very much appreciates the staff who support the committees, and we have named those culprits in the annual report. They are Ms Denise Wong and Ms Anne Turner, who provide excellent support as advisory officers, and the senior committee clerk, Mr David Driscoll, who is a very experienced committee clerk. On behalf of the members of the committee, I am grateful to the staff for the support they have offered us over the year.

I will make a couple of comments on the bills referred to the committee. Two referrals were made with very short time frames. The 2005 limitation bills came to us with significant restraints on the time we had to deal with them. The Taxi Amendment Bill 2005 was referred to us on 1 December 2005 and the committee reported back to the house very early in this year's sittings. Details of the inquiry on that bill will be included in our next annual report, so the date of the report is not included in the report under discussion. Both those referrals had quite short lead times and the committee found it desirable to make some observations about this in its annual report. These observations are contained in section 8 of the report, where we state that the short reporting time frames, particularly in relation to the limitation bills, meant that the committee was unable to produce as comprehensive reports as might otherwise have been possible. It would be a little perplexing if bills were referred to the committee with short time frames and then sat on the notice paper waiting to be considered by the house. I am not saying that this occurred with the limitation bills, because they were dealt with by the house quite expeditiously after the report of the committee, as was the Taxi Amendment Bill. Short-term referrals are quite acceptable if they are necessary to progress legislation, but members should be mindful that they place the committee and the staff under particular pressure, and we may not be able to deal with these matters as extensively as we would prefer.

The Parental Support and Responsibility Bill 2005 was also referred to the committee and has not yet been reported back to the house. That is a matter in which the policy of the bill was also referred for inquiry, which has given the committee an opportunity to deal in some detail with the bill. That bill was before the committee at the time the Taxi Amendment Bill was referred. Members will note that the report shows the date of referral as earlier than that of the Taxi Amendment Bill. It was also before the committee when the three criminal investigation bills were referred to the committee. Both those referrals had reasonably short time frames that required the committee to concentrate on those matters to meet the deadlines given. Regrettably, that has meant that the committee has had the Parental Support and Responsibility Bill before it longer than it would have liked. I am hoping that the bill will be reported back to the house well before it celebrates the first anniversary of its original referral.

With those few words, and particularly noting section 8 about reporting time frames, I commend the report to the committee.

Question put and passed.

Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment 1071/33 - Statement by Parliamentary Secretary

Resumed from 8 November 2005.

Motion

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I move -

That the statement be noted.

As members would be aware, the metropolitan region scheme amendment that is the subject of this ministerial statement was finalised some time ago. It has been discussed in this place before, and no further action is necessary at this time.

Question put and passed.

Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission - Fourth Report - Acting Parliamentary Inspector's Report in the Matter of an Allegation Concerning the Honourable John D'Orazio MLA

Resumed from 22 March.

Motion

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I move -

That the report be noted.

The Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission presented this report in relation to an issue that was in the public arena earlier this year. The Acting Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission undertook an investigation on behalf of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission. There is a parliamentary inspector, Malcolm McCusker, and an acting parliamentary inspector, Graeme Scott. The report of the acting parliamentary inspector in relation to these alleged occurrences is at the back of the committee's report, as appendix 2. In that report, headed "Report in the Matter of an Allegation Concerning the Honourable John D'Orazio MLA", the acting parliamentary inspector discusses what he undertook to reach his conclusion. What I am about to say is no reflection on the acting parliamentary inspector or any other individual; it is purely my cynical approach to these things, being firstly a politician and secondly, unfortunately some would say, an accountant. I am always looking for the right word or the right position and the right outcome. I am not suggesting for one moment that we have not had the right outcome in this instance.

Members may or may not be aware of the role of the parliamentary inspector and I will not go into any great detail about it. The parliamentary inspector is a go-between linking the joint standing committee, which is an arm of the Parliament, with the Corruption and Crime Commission itself. Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission are not at liberty to see operational matters or operational papers, but are able to ask the parliamentary inspector to undertake that role on behalf of the committee. We are totally reliant on the parliamentary inspector to provide information in a manner that makes sense. It has to be provided in such a manner that I, as a member of the committee, can quite comfortably presume that, from all that has been written, I would draw the same conclusion.

I mentioned the cynical approach that I often take. Paragraph 4 of the acting parliamentary inspector's report reads -

On 14 March 2006 I attended the office of the CCC in St George's Terrace, Perth where I inspected the file and the papers made available to me by the officers of the Commission.

I am particularly cynical about the acting parliamentary inspector being provided with papers. Was he given all the papers that were available? These are the types of questions that come to mind whether we are dealing with this issue or any other issue. The wording of the report does not suggest that all the documentation that needed to be looked was looked at. The wording quite categorically states "made available to me by the officers". I do not know whether the officers provided everything that should have been provided - that is my cynical approach.

I have placed a question mark beside a number of issues in the report. Paragraph 7 of the report refers in some detail to the problems associated with two people and the son of one of those people. Paragraph 6 reads -

This lasted for six to seven months. Mr Emilio Spagnolo was paid poorly, and this was a matter of concern to Mr Spagnolo.

It is interesting that we have a situation in which a Labor member is involved - it matters not which Labor member - yet we are talking about poorly paid workers. That is my cynicism showing itself yet again.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I do not think it is cynicism; rather, it is commendable concern for the welfare of those involved.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: At this point I can go only on the information in the report. There may be more to the matter that is not written in the report, and that is what I am getting at. When I refer to the writing of the report I do not mean to reflect badly on Mr Scott, because he was trying to reach a particular conclusion without knowing what was going through my mind or the minds of the other members of the committee. There is reference to Mr Emilio Spagnolo working for Mr Drago and being poorly paid, and then suddenly paragraph 7 reads -

Mr Spagnolo was anxious to have his son Emilio not only work for the business but, because Mr Spagnolo had sent clients to Mr Drago, he wanted his son to have a share in it.

Again, as an accountant, I look at both sides of the ledger. Mr Spagnolo wanted his son to have a share in it, but for what consideration? There is no mention of consideration. Was it previously the case that he had been poorly paid? Did he calculate the difference between what he should have been paid and what he was paid, and decide that the difference would pay for his share of the business? We do not know. Again, when I read something like this, those are the types of questions that come to mind. Paragraph 8 states -

Mr Emilio Spagnolo decided to set up his own carpet business under the name of 'Goldwater'.

That appears to have taken place. Even though two companies were formed - two company names are mentioned - and even though they went to the trouble and expense of incorporating another company and

starting a business, an effort was made to reconcile the dispute. One could ask the acting parliamentary inspector many questions about those issues.

Some of the statements in the report, which contains 24 paragraphs, are, as has been expressed by the acting parliamentary inspector, his opinion. That is fine; I accept that. Certainly the committee expected the acting parliamentary inspector to have an opinion. However, having received the acting parliamentary inspector's report and the CCC's report of 3 March 2006, the committee decided to inquire further of the acting parliamentary inspector. As is set out on pages 2 and 3 of the report, the committee asked the acting parliamentary inspector to -

- a. Ascertain when a more formal and extensive report by the CCC to the Parliament will be finalised;
- b. Clarify the basis upon which he was satisfied with the CCC's assertion that prior to 22 February 2006:

Mr D'Orazio was not the subject of any adverse information or finding within this Commission nor, to the best of the Commission's knowledge and belief, in the holdings of the prior Anti-Corruption Commission.

That is a statement of itself. It provides no indication of how it came to that conclusion; therefore, the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission asked the acting parliamentary inspector to inquire into that matter to at least have it recorded. The purpose of the exercise was not to dispute matters - certainly members of the committee were not in a position to dispute; nor did they wish to be - but to place on the record what had been done to satisfy my inquiring mind and future inquiring minds. The committee also requested the acting parliamentary inspector to -

- c. Clarify that:

The term "Godfather" used by Ms Chong alone and only once at the public hearing was a throw away line and was not intended nor did it have any further meaning or significance

In particular, the Committee requests the Acting Parliamentary Inspector to advise it of the basis upon which he accepted the Commission's opinion as to the intent or significance of Ms Chong's choice of phrase;

Of course, it was the CCC's report that suggested that the word was a throwaway line. Although it has been said that the use of the word "godfather" was unfortunate, I believe that the commission's use of the phrase "throw away line" was unfortunate.

Hon Kim Chance: Why?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Although that will be discussed in a subsequent report, I will allude to it now. I am not suggesting that anything untoward happened. I am looking at what words and processes were used. We asked the acting parliamentary inspector to go back and find out, because there was no mention at all that Ms Chong had been asked. There was just the statement that it was a throwaway line. Nothing in the reports said Ms Chong told us that it was a throwaway line. We later checked and found it was. There was just a statement from the CCC with no indication that it had checked with the person who had spoken the words.

Hon Kim Chance: I am glad you have done it.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I think it needed to be clarified. It mattered not who it was. This is purely about process.

Hon Kim Chance: If it was a throwaway line, why did Ms Chong not make a public declaration and apology?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I do not think she was asked. I think that was part and parcel of the problem.

Hon Graham Giffard interjected.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: It comes out in a later report. What she said was that she was using a term of endearment in her Chinese culture. Okay, she translated it to the word "godfather", but she meant a word of endearment in her Chinese culture. She would have used a different word in Chinese, but translated it to "godfather". That is what she explained later and that is what we asked the acting parliamentary inspector to ascertain, and so it was clarified. All I am saying is that, as a matter of process, the information that we originally received was deficient. I believe that the joint standing committee did the right thing by going down this path and ascertaining exactly what Ms Chong did mean. It was clarified. All I am doing is talking about process, not about individuals or who is right or who is wrong. We believe that certain steps should be taken, and that is the reason for some of these reports. In fact, that was the reason for this report. We mentioned four

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areas that we required the acting parliamentary inspector to clarify to bring it to everyone's attention. We believe it is important that the CCC does its job and does things in a timely manner and is open and accountable, that the parliamentary inspector does exactly the same thing, and that the joint standing committee, being an arm of this Parliament, has an obligation to ensure that timely reports are given to Parliament so that members of Parliament are totally aware of what is happening.

With regard to paragraph c and what is meant by the term "godfather", I would have thought the best thing to do would be to go back to Ms Chong and ask her and not accept a third or fourth person's interpretation. I would have thought that that is what this type of thing is all about. I am not a lawyer, but I would have expected that that type of direct evidence is particularly important for the record so that in 12 months or 12 years when people read these reports, there are no what I term gaping holes, or no question marks.

Hon Graham Giffard: Did the committee subsequently report on this matter?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Yes, there have been further reports.

Hon Graham Giffard: On 1.2?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: Yes, on those issues and they will come up in subsequent reports.

Hon Graham Giffard: Have they already been tabled?

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: They have already been tabled, yes. It is unfortunate that it appears to be somewhat disjointed at this point. That is why I am taking some time to explain without going into a great deal of detail. The next paragraph states -

d. Clarify the basis upon which he was satisfied with the CCC's decision that -

Clearly then there is a divergence in the evidence as to whether or not the business arrangements were discussed inside Mr D'Orazio's office. It is not appropriate, nor necessary, for the Commission to resolve this inconsistency in the evidence . . .

On the face of it, one would have to ask why that is the case, when all the committee required was an explanation. My first reading of that is that it is not appropriate or necessary. Why is it not necessary and why is it not appropriate? As long as a reasonable report is provided, it is accepted. However, at this point in time there was one of those, what I have described as, gaping holes. There were a few too many question marks at that point.

I may be being cynical in all this and reading too much into it. However, I am looking for a flow; I am looking for a bit of a novel, I suppose, that has a beginning, a middle and an end. It is no good trying to read it if a few chapters have been left out.

As I have said, all the committee was looking for was to ensure that a process was in place, and that the CCC and the parliamentary inspector had followed it in a manner that members of Parliament would expect of the committee. It is unfortunate that I cannot further describe issues in report 4. However, when further reports are brought on, I will refer very quickly to report 4 so there is that continuity of information. Again, it is not a matter of whether the member in the other place is part of this process. The individuals involved can be nameless. The committee was after only the process, and I can assure members of this place that the committee has continued down that path on not only this issue but also other issues. The committee believes that certain things need to be done and it will continue to work to ensure that they are done so that members of each house can feel comfortable not only that the CCC is doing its job, but also that its watchdog in the parliamentary inspector is doing his job, and the people of Western Australia can feel very comfortable that the commission is looking after their interests.

Further reports from the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission will be coming forward over the next few months. That will give members of this place the opportunity to better understand the process that the joint standing committee is going through to try to ensure that they can feel comfortable that things are being done in an appropriate and a timely manner.

Question put and passed.

Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment 1081/33 - Statement by Parliamentary Secretary

Resumed from 8 November 2005.

Consideration of statement lapsed.

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs - Fourth Report - Annual Report 2005

Resumed from 23 March.

Motion

Hon Kim Chance; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ray Halligan; Hon Louise Pratt

Hon LOUISE PRATT: I move -

That the report be noted.

It is a fairly new tradition for parliamentary committees to table annual reports. This is a short report. Many of the matters that we summarised in our report have been reported to Parliament already and have been discussed in the time allowed for the discussion of reports and ministerial statements. There is not really a great deal to reflect on in this report. It is worth noting that an annual report is quite useful in being an accessible document to the public as a way of outlining the functions and tasks that the different committees of this house undertake. It is an easy and accessible way for the public to discern the nature of the work undertaken by each committee. People might be hard-pressed to work out what exactly that was; however, annual reports are an easy way of doing that.

This report notes that we have finalised a number of petitions. In fact, we finalised 10 by the date of the report. Sixteen remain for consideration. In all, we received 55 petitions on 26 individual topics. In the context of an annual report, it is also worth thanking our committee staff. In particular I thank Stefanie Dobro because I have not had a chance in this house to thank Stefanie for her outstanding parliamentary work as an advisory officer. We have now lost Stefanie from the committee office to Murdoch University. She will be a great asset to the university.

Hon Kim Chance: I saw her there the other day. She looked very well.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: She is indeed very well and doing very well. The committee is now ably assisted in that role by Vincent Cusack. He is a new staff member and we have given him a warm welcome. On an ongoing basis we have been ably served by Mark Warner. An annual report also provides a brief opportunity to outline any seminars and conferences attended by members of the committee. Last year Hon Paul Llewellyn and I attended the conference of environment and public works committees in Canberra. The theme of last year's conference was sustainability and bushfire recovery. It was indeed an interesting conference but it has not had much intersection with issues of deliberation by our committee. In attending a parliamentary conference one also gets a great opportunity to network with members of other committees about a wide range of issues. Indeed, it allows also parliamentary staff to exchange views. It was worth noting some of the lessons learnt from the Australian Capital Territory concerning sustainability and bushfire recovery, which included that the unthinkable can happen. Members might remember the terrible bushfires in the ACT. The ACT sought to share the lessons it had learnt in hindsight with us, which is that we need biodiversity plans to look after natural biodiversity assets should large areas of land be wiped out by bushfires or other natural disasters. That relates to the fire adaptation of our flora and fauna. We also had some discussion concerning bushfire risk and climate change and the future outlook. We discussed the need for all Australian jurisdictions to be ready because, due to climate change, there will be more bushfires in the future. We also looked at the large amount of biodiversity that had been wiped out in the ACT as well as the process of renewal that has taken place. It provided an opportunity for renewal in planning and for the ACT to start from scratch in some areas of infrastructure and community assets that it would like to see built.

In addition, our advisory officer attended an environmental protection law workshop at the University of Western Australia law school. I understand that it was very worthwhile. I thank the chamber for the opportunity of commenting on the committee's annual report.

Question put and passed.

Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment 1090/33 - Statement by Parliamentary Secretary

Resumed from 8 November 2005.

Consideration of statement lapsed.

Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission - Fifth Report - Examination of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Corruption and Crime Commission

Resumed from 4 April.

Motion

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I move -

That the report be noted.

The fifth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission is an examination of the 2004-05 annual report of the commission itself. Attached to the report are transcripts of evidence received from members of the commission and from the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission, Mr Malcolm McCusker, as distinct from the acting parliamentary inspector, Graeme Scott.

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL - Wednesday, 27 September 2006]

p6720d-6727a

Hon Kim Chance; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ray Halligan; Hon Louise Pratt

The Corruption and Crime Commission has been operating for some years now. Of course, as members are aware, it took over from the Anti-Corruption Commission. If I can put it this way, the Corruption and Crime Commission is still finding its feet inasmuch as there are certain aspects of its undertakings that it believes legislation does not necessarily fully cover. Again, these are issues that will arise over the next few months. Members will be aware that the Corruption and Crime Commission Bill 2003 was passed by this Parliament. That enabled the commission to be established. Members of the joint standing committee are of the belief that the Corruption and Crime Commission is doing a very good job at this point in time. No-one has a crystal ball, so I will not say “into the future”! With hindsight, it seems to be doing a very, very good job. We are quite comfortable with that. We are quite happy to be able to report to Parliament in that regard. If there are any issues, be assured that we will bring them to the attention of Parliament, even if they are only small issues. Things need to be aired and put on the table on occasion. It might be a piece to a jigsaw puzzle that assists people in better understanding whether it is associated with Parliament or something outside Parliament. To date the commission is doing a very good job.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to sessional orders.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm