

DAMPIER TO BUNBURY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE, STAMP DUTY

685. Mr M.W. TRENORDEN to the Minister for Energy:

I refer the minister to his media release yesterday announcing the sale of the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline to a consortium that includes Alcoa and Alinta and stating that the consortium will pay stamp duty in full.

- (1) What is the full amount of stamp duty to be paid by the consortium on the sale of the pipeline?
- (2) When will the stamp duty be collected from the consortium?
- (3) If stamp duty is to be paid in full on the pipeline sale, what are taxpayers getting for the \$88 million of financial assistance in the form of the loan that the Government is giving to big businesses like Alcoa and Alinta?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

- (1)-(3) That question was not quite as articulate as the usual questions asked by the Leader of the National Party on Epic pipeline matters. That is probably because Epic is under new ownership and the company does not write his questions any more.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What a disgraceful allegation.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Is it true? Does the Leader of the National Party deny that the questions that he has asked in this House were drafted by Epic?

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Not one question that I asked in this place has been drawn up by Epic Energy.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: That is not what we have heard!

Withdrawal of Remark

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: I ask the Minister for Energy to withdraw that comment, because he implied that the Leader of the National Party is being asked to ask questions. The allegation was basically along the lines of planting questions in this House for some benefit. I ask the Minister for Energy to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I do not consider the minister's comment to be a breach of our standing orders.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Members opposite cannot stand what the Government is doing. The Government is providing tax cuts totalling \$1 billion and has arranged for the sale of the pipeline, which will resolve the botched privatisation process engaged in by the Leader of the Opposition and provide a measure of energy security for the next 25 years. That will solve the problem bequeathed to us by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Energy. This has been a major strategic obstacle to the economic development of the State. It has been a major threat to the security of our electricity supply. It has been a major threat to jobs, growth and investment in the south west. There are gas-consuming industries -

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition just interjected on the Minister for Energy and said the word "corrupt". I ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear that, but if that was said, I am sure the Leader of the Opposition regrets saying it and will withdraw it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Speaker, I did not accuse the Minister for Energy of corruption. I raised the question of whether the deal was corrupt. It probably is.

The SPEAKER: I left the matter in the hands of the Leader of the Opposition. He relayed what he said. I now call the minister.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I imagine that the people who own and manage Alcoa and Alinta would be grossly insulted by the suggestion that any deal in which they engaged would be corrupt, let alone the offence that has been taken by

members on this side of the House to such a completely unfounded and absolutely grubby assertion. We have had to deal with a major problem that was given to us by the Leader of the Opposition. We have set about solving it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What is the \$88 million for?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The \$88 million is for the expansion of the pipeline so that we can have energy security in this State, so that there is the opportunity for more gas to come down that pipeline to service gas-consuming industries, and so that we get the investment, jobs and growth that the Government is seeking through its \$1 billion tax relief package. Can members not see that the theme is about growing the economy and about jobs and investment, and that the pipeline objective was the same as the tax cut objective. It is all about doing what members opposite could not do; that is, to keep the Western Australian economy growing at a high but sustainable rate over the coming years. I make no apology for tackling the botched privatisation left to us by the Leader of the Opposition. I make no apology for the State investing in the infrastructure that the south west of this State needs for energy security and economic growth. Yes, the new owners paid stamp duty on the pipeline, and yes, the Government has made a financial commitment to assist in the expansion of the pipeline, which is exactly what it should have done in the interests of our community -

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Table the document.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: What is the member asking me?

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: What are you getting for your \$88 million?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Hang on! Just a minute! The member does not need to get quite so excited. The member for Kingsley has asked me if I will table the financial assistance agreement covering this matter. I do not have it with me, but of course I will!