

CROSS-BORDER BETTING, REPORT

485. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Has a report on cross-border betting been compiled for the Government?
- (2) If so, what are the major findings in the report?
- (3) Will the minister table the report; and, if not, why not?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS replied:

I thank the honourable member for the question, and for raising this very important issue of cross-border betting.

- (1)-(3) A report dealing with cross-border betting has been prepared and was received by Australasian racing ministers at the last racing ministers conference in Melbourne.

Hon Barry House: Was that on or about the first Tuesday in November?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: No, but it was close; it was on the first Friday.

The report was commissioned by the racing ministers at their previous meeting earlier in the year. The person in charge of getting the report together, I am pleased to inform the House, was the Director General of the Western Australian Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor, Mr Barry Sargeant. That demonstrates the esteem in which Mr Sargeant is held by racing ministers in Australia and New Zealand. I referred to Australasian racing ministers earlier, but I should point out that the New Zealand racing minister was not able to attend the conference, but was represented by another person.

The report was received and considered by the ministers, and the decision was made to refer it to the working party which had compiled it under instructions from the ministers - again presided over by Mr Sargeant - with a view to allowing the key stakeholders to have input into the issue to advance the method of dealing with cross-border betting. When that input from the industry is received, the matter will be dealt with, and it is anticipated that will occur at the next racing ministers conference. This is considered to be a very urgent issue, and it is anticipated that the next conference will be held on or about 21 or 22 February 2003. I trust the House will note the lead role played by Western Australia in dealing with this matter. I should acknowledge, in that context, the particular efforts of Victoria and New South Wales, because this issue needs to be sorted out.

At this stage there has been no decision by the ministers collectively to cause the documents to come into the public domain, but I can assure the honourable member that when a decision is reached I will cause that to occur. I hope to have a very good response and a good outcome for the racing industry, in particular the Western Australian industry, following the meeting in February. If the honourable member wishes to have a briefing on these issues, I would be very happy to accommodate him.