

STATE-BASED UNIONS

16. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to the motion carried at the Labor Party's state conference in June 2002 that a Labor Government would not be a party to or actively engage in any orchestrated campaign to deregister any state-based unions.

- (1) Will the Premier give an undertaking to the people of Western Australia that his Government will not be bound by that motion carried at the Labor Party state conference?
- (2) In the event that the Cole royal commission were to make such a recommendation, would the Government take action on that recommendation?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(2) Good try, member for Kingsley! I give the member a few points for trying! A hypothetical question does not deserve an answer. When it comes to matters related to what goes on in our community and our society and recommendations that may or may not come forward from particular royal commissions or inquiries, unlike members opposite, we will deal with that on the basis of the facts that come forward, not on the basis of our prejudices. Members opposite have a deep in-built prejudice against any organisations that represent workers. We saw that when they were in government. We will deal with these issues on the basis of the facts that are presented to us. If those facts are presented to us by an inquiry or by others, we will deal with them in that way, as any Government should do. When members opposite were in government their prejudice was such that they said that unions are not an acceptable part of our society. Therefore, whenever an issue came up, they spent their time in this Parliament -

Mr R.F. Johnson: When did we say that?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: It is in-built in the psychology of members opposite.

Several members interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: If the Liberal Party is not based on opposition to trade unions, why does it exist? That is the very reason that we have the Liberal Party. Every time the Liberal Party is in government, that philosophy manifests itself.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are a student of political science, and you come up with something like that!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: If I am not allowed to interpret the motivations and ideology of members opposite, then they are trying to restrict healthy debate. When it comes to debate, the comments that the member for Hillarys made yesterday would have to go down as the most politically apt comments ever made in Western Australian history. We will determine our response to these matters on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the times.