

TRAVEL EXPENDITURE

932. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Treasurer:

What is the Treasurer's response to the temporary Deputy Leader of the Opposition's criticism of government travel expenditure?

The SPEAKER: Members know the rules about how we address people in this place. That was a deliberate misrepresentation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's title. I call to order the member for the first time.

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

Mr Speaker -

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr T. Buswell: "No Mates" Whitely.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: He is loyal to his mates.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Yesterday, the government tabled two quarterly travel reports, which detail the travel costs of all members of Parliament and public servants for the last six months of last year. We know that there was a jump in travel costs in the period in question compared with the same period in the previous year. Quite rightly, the Premier issued a circular to all public servants urging them - instructing them - to curb unnecessary travel.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Murdoch to order.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: We saw accountability in action and action in response by this government. I believe the Premier's move should be applauded. However, who should I see on television last night attacking the government? It was one-half of the car park conspiracy, the current and temporary Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition may not realise it, but the quarterly reports cover the travel expenditure of all members of Parliament, including members of the opposition. When we checked through the travel records of some of the Liberal Party MPs, we gained an interesting insight into the actual expenditure practices of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

In June last year, the member for Vasse, as he then was, travelled to Canberra for a Liberal Party conference. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Carine attended the same conference, but for a slightly longer period. The cost of the trip for the Leader of the Opposition was about \$1 400. He travelled economy class, which has to be commended. However, guess what the costs were for the member for Vasse for a one-night trip? He was away for just one night. He travelled within Australia. The Leader of the Opposition had a comparable itinerary, and his travel costs were about \$1 400. What do members think the member for Vasse spent, using taxpayers' funds - \$1 000, \$2 000, \$3 000? The cost of the member for Vasse's one-night stopover in Canberra was \$3 922 - almost three times the cost of his leader's trip. What I want to know is: how could a member charge taxpayers nearly \$4 000 for a one-night trip to Canberra? How could he do that?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: There are -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! My patience is just about exhausted. This could well be very near the end of question time for this year. We need to be able to get answers to questions. I urge the Treasurer to bring his answer to a close.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: There are larger issues involved with this matter; that is, the larger issues of hypocrisy and duplicity. The man who privately spent nearly \$4 000 on his own one-night trip publicly criticised the government's travel expenditure. The man who publicly opposed the Smiths Beach development privately helped a disgraced lobbyist to stack the council in favour of the developer. The man who publicly declared loyalty to his former leader privately plotted his downfall, and not just for a day either, member for Kalgoorlie, but for weeks and weeks and weeks. I have a probity warning for the media and the public: do not listen to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says. Watch his actions. Do not listen to what he says publicly. Watch his private actions. That is the real measure of the man.