

MR ROSS BROMELL

1265. Hon ADELE FARINA to the Minister for Housing and Works:

Has the minister received any advice from the Shire of Busselton about claims made yesterday in this House by Hon Barry House?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

Hon Barry House suggested in a question yesterday that in my dealings with the Busselton Shire Council, I have inappropriately used Mr Ross Bromell. I have contacted the Shire of Busselton and checked a variety of assertions.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Did the minister indicate yesterday that this question was taken on notice?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Not this question, Mr President. I said yesterday that if Hon Barry House wanted to put the question on notice, he could. Hon Adele Farina has asked me a question of a different sort altogether.

Hon Barry House: You said you would give a considered response.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I put the specific propositions to Beryle Morgan, the Shire President of the Shire of Busselton, and I received a response today. The first question is-

“Is the Shire of Busselton suggesting that I have inappropriately used Mr Ross Bromell as an intermediary with the Shire of Busselton”?

The letter states, “No.”

Hon Barry House: Keep reading! So far you have not given a full answer.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am going to. Another question is -

“Is it correct that the Shire of Busselton has requested me not to visit the Town”?

Again, the answer is, “No.”

Hon Kim Chance: Is that so? We were told yesterday that the opposite was the case. Were we misled?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is exactly what was asserted. Mr President will probably tell us that there is a case for a privilege committee in this place. Perhaps that is what should happen. Another question is -

“Is it correct that the Shire of Busselton has cancelled the Billboard opening in part because the Shire of Busselton is of the view that your “community is totally fed up with the Minister’s arrogant and discourteous approach”?

I ask members to remember the claim of Hon Barry House. Beryle Morgan replies -

“No. The Billboard opening was cancelled due to confusion now surrounding the event and the fact that it is not yet complete. . . .

Hon Barry House: Which is what I said.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The minister should remember that he is not answering a question from Hon Barry House. He is answering a question from Hon Adele Farina, and, indeed, he made that point at the start of his answer. The minister should address the relevant question.

Hon Barry House: You are misleading by omission!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: If I am misleading by omission, Hon Barry House was misleading the House yesterday by every one of his assertions, all of which have been rejected. I went to the Shire of Busselton and met this very pleasant person, Beryle Morgan. I did not think it was possible that this person would have the same vituperative style as Hon Barry House. I am pleased to say that the faxed response from this person - I understand from other dialogue in the House that she was a National Party candidate, probably with the same good manner as Hon Murray Criddle -

Point of Order

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I ask the minister to table the letter.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have not finished my answer, Mr President; and that was not a point of order.

Hon Norman Moore: Since when have you been the President as well as the loudest mouth in the House?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The document has been identified. There will be an appropriate opportunity when the minister finishes his answer.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Yes, to see whether I will table it. Members will be well aware of the standing order that protects any document held in the hand of a minister.

Hon Norman Moore: It does not, actually. You had better read the standing orders.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hon Barry House has a copy of the letter, as have other members in the House.

Hon George Cash: You are now going to read the lot!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am going to! Give me a chance to read the lot! I can remember when I used to try to get documents out of members opposite.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: If the House wants me to read it, I am happy to. Assertion after assertion was made by Hon Barry House yesterday, in what was effectively a fabrication by him, and in my view he should apologise.

Hon Barry House: Read the full contents of the letter and then table it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The next assertion was that there was to be an invitation for me to open the Billboard project; and this is where I can now correct one thing that was said in the House on 27 March. The letter from Beryle Morgan states -

The Chief Executive Officer advises me that the arrangements agreed with you were that you would make yourself available to open the Billboard Project on receipt of an invitation from Council.

Hon Barry House: Which you did not receive.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: What apparently happened is that the proposal that I be invited was put to council, but, as now explained in this letter, the Billboard opening was cancelled due to confusion now surrounding the event. It had nothing to do with the assertion that Hon Barry House made.

Hon Barry House: Read on!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hon Barry House should apologise to the House for his false assertions yesterday. I conclude my remarks to the House.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! The minister is trying to conclude his remarks.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, I would be happy to seek the leave of the House to not only table the letter but also have the letter incorporated in *Hansard*, and then we will all have -

Hon Barry House: Why not read out the bit about the council's concerns about protocols between the shire and the minister?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I seek the leave of the House to read out the whole letter.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The member may, if he is still addressing the answer, read out the letter, or he may seek leave to table the letter. What is the minister seeking to do?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I seek the leave of the House to table the letter and have the letter incorporated in *Hansard*.

Hon Norman Moore: No. Just read the letter. That is all you need to do.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The minister has asked for leave for that purpose. Is leave granted?

[Leave denied.]

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hon Norman Moore does not want it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Hon Norman Moore: There is no need to incorporate it in *Hansard*.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In reference to the question on the protocols that the Shire of Busselton had observed, the council said that it had requested that all contact be directed between the council personnel and the minister's office, aided and assisted by Ms Adele Farina MLC, on an as needs basis. I am pleased that the council recognised that it should not deal with Hon Barry House, because he will politicise the matter and cause endless amounts of trouble.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think the answer has concluded.

Point of Order

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I seek leave to table a letter from the minister in relation to that answer.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hang on, I was trying to do that.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: No, the minister is too late. I seek leave to table a letter from the minister to the Shire of Busselton and a reply from the President of the Shire of Busselton to the minister.

[Leave denied.]

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Under Standing Order No 48, I ask that the minister table the letter.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I table the letter.

[See paper No 1357.]