

DAIRY INDUSTRY, PROCESSING PLANT FUNDS

**314. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Primary Industry:**

In the past weeks I have attended meetings outlining proposals by the Challenge Cooperative Group and Peters and Brownes Food Ltd's Kiwi Cooperative Dairies Ltd. Will the minister please advise me, so that I can tell my dairy farmer constituents, the basic principles that he believes will be applied to the allocation of the \$12m promised for the further development of processing plants in Western Australia?

**Mr HOUSE replied:**

I have had two questions in one day.

Mr Brown: You will be wanting double time next. It has doubled your workload.

Mr HOUSE: Absolutely.

Ms MacTiernan: Given the quality of your answers, you probably need danger money.

Mr HOUSE: I am glad to see the member is awake; she was asleep a little while ago. She should please pay attention, because the answer is important. If the Labor Party ever gets into government, it will have to do something for rural Western Australia.

The dairy industry was deregulated after the Federal Government refused to continue the domestic market support scheme. The federal legislation sunsetted that support scheme at the end of July. As a consequence of that, the State Government had to introduce legislation to access the federal package that was available at the time.

Mr Kobelke: You gave up without a fight, minister. That is the problem.

Mr HOUSE: No we did not. Let me remind the member opposite that the Labor Government in Victoria introduced the first legislation to deregulate, closely followed by the Queensland and New South Wales Labor Governments, prior to our passing legislation. He should not glibly say that we gave in. At the ministerial table, the Labor States gave in. The member voted for the legislation, so he should not sit there with a smirk on his face trying to make out that we did it; it is not the case.

Mr Kobelke: It was not! We know you do nothing. We are glad you acknowledge it.

Mr HOUSE: Let me remind the member that the domestic market support legislation was introduced by a Federal Labor Government, which put the sunset clause in the legislation; it was not a conservative Government. This was the only State that offered farmers any state support. I am very glad that we did. The Labor States of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland offered their farmers absolutely nothing. I suspect the Labor Party's policy to be announced next week will not offer the farmers anything if it gets into government. The principle of the State Government support package by which we will allocate money to processors is that we will need to see an increase in prices to farmers.