

CITY OF BELMONT INQUIRY

22. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:

When the Department of Local Government and Regional Development inquiry into the City of Belmont commenced in January, the city council was advised that it would be completed in six weeks and that a report would be presented in March.

- (1) Can the minister tell the House why the inquiry has continued for seven months without the department being able to decide whether the City of Belmont has a case to answer or advise the minister on any necessary further action?
- (2) Does the minister expect an early report from his department on this inquiry, and if not, why not?
- (3) When can the City of Belmont anticipate a report or action by the minister?

Hon Tom Stephens: Who originally provided that advice to the City of Belmont?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Officers of the minister's department.

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

- (1)-(3) I was not aware of the time line about which the honourable member spoke. I will make fresh inquiries with my department about this matter. I triggered an inquiry along similar lines at the beginning of the week when I saw some media reference to it. I have sought advice from my department about where and when this issue is going. Members would appreciate that these matters of an investigative nature are handled at considerable length from the minister to the point -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Certainly of considerable length.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: "Distance" was the word I was looking for.

Hon Peter Foss: You were right the first time. It's called a Freudian slip.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: We understood what he meant.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I think it is only appropriate that such an investigation be carried out at considerable distance from me.

Hon Peter Foss: Unlike the awarding of contracts.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The minister is trying to complete his answer to Hon Derrick Tomlinson's question.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Shall I complete it? He does not know.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is what I was endeavouring to say to the member: I do not know. It is appropriate that I not know. However, now that these questions have been asked, we will see what the answer is. These are investigative matters over which I do not exercise control.