

PUBLIC SERVICE, FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Urgency Motion

THE PRESIDENT (Hon J.A. Cowdell): I received the following letter this morning -

Dear Mr President

At today's sitting it is my intention to move pursuant to SO 72 that the House at its rising adjourn until 9.00 am of Friday 21st December 2001 for the purpose of discussing the serious concerns that are becoming evident in the community resulting from the Government's lack of direction in respect to the future of the public service and its employees.

Yours sincerely

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC

Member for South Metropolitan Region

The member will require the support of four members in order to move the motion.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [3.42 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until 9.00 am on Friday, 21 December.

In moving the motion I draw the House's attention to the state of the public sector in Western Australia, especially its morale and the flow-on effect which devolves to the public at large who rely on the services that the public sector provides. I make it quite clear that Western Australia has a civil service of which it can be very proud indeed - a civil service that has served this State over many generations with great diligence and professionalism. That is equally true today. The civil servants at the disposal of the State are by and large first-class. Traditions within the civil service are not necessarily written down in any codified form applicable across the civil service, but nonetheless they exist by custom. Those traditions include a commitment to impartiality in the way the affairs of the State are administered, and in civil servants' dealings with members of the public. It involves a degree of competence that relies on qualifications and training, the employment of techniques and resources, and all manner of human resources in order that civil servants can perform their duties professionally and competently. I have no doubt that our public sector has the capacity to continue to exhibit those traits in the future. However, from time to time the public sector may find itself in a position of uncertainty, caused by the sort of review and restructure that this Government is proposing, and that may result in the loss of morale that sometimes accompanies such changes, especially when changes are not thoroughly enunciated.

I take members back to 11 March when the Premier announced that the State Government had appointed a four member task force to review the structure of the Western Australian public sector. The task force has four members: the chairman, Mr Stuart Hicks; Mr Mal Wauchope, the director general of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet; Mr John Langoulant, the Under Treasurer; and Dr Ruth Shean, the chief executive officer of the Disability Services Commission. A good month after the Labor Government came to power, it announced it would carry out a review of the structure of the public sector. That sort of thing causes a ripple of apprehension throughout any civil service when it is announced, let alone when the only detail the Premier gives at the time is that there will be a radical reduction in the number of government departments, accompanied by the announcement that 60 of some of the most senior positions will also be abolished. That means in human terms that 60 of our most experienced, professional and senior civil servants will leave the service of the public in Western Australia. Of course, we do not know who those 60 are, but in a civil service the size of that in Western Australia, 60 senior executive positions represents one hell of a reduction in one chop.

The announcement was reported the next day by Mr Roger Martin, a journalist with *The Australian* with the predictable headline "... fat cats to go in Labor revamp". It is always popular to speak of "fat cats" when referring to senior bureaucrats. I hoped that members of the Government would take exception to that sort of remark about senior officers on whom they must rely.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Fat chance.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I do not remember any such challenge. That comment about fat cats went unnoticed because it is fashionable for Labor Governments when they take office to announce that they will get rid of the fat cats. The last time we saw this happen was with the accession of the Burke Government in the early 1980s,

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when there was a decimation of the top ranks of the public sector in this State. Nothing I have seen so far gives me any confidence that the same old game plan is not happening once again.

The issue goes beyond that because as soon as such radical restructuring and wholesale rearrangements of departmental heads are announced, of course speculation runs rife, and that results in a ripple effect throughout the rest of the civil service. This has manifest itself over the past three months, because it is three months and one day since Dr Gallop announced his review and that 60 so-called fat cats would be given the chop. What have we seen now to resolve the uncertainty that those sorts of announcements cause? Nothing further has happened to date. If ministers opposite are able to give the House more information, I would appreciate it if they will take the opportunity to do so in a few moments. In the meantime, however, there is a position of uncertainty that the Leader of the Opposition Colin Barnett warned last month was a plan that would lead to year-long turmoil in the public service and affect thousands of public servants. It will affect not only those who are reorganised but also those who find their positions redundant as a result of a restructuring of the public sector. On 4 May Mr Barnett said that he believed the restructure could result in about 5 000 public sector jobs going. That is an interesting move on the part of a Labor Government.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: That was the Leader of the Opposition's plan.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, it was not his plan; he was commenting on the Premier's plan. The Opposition waits with great anticipation to see where the razor will be slashed and to whose throat it will be applied.

While all that was going on, there was a great deal of hiring of people in ministers' offices, as would be expected. Ministers can take on staff at the opening of their term of government and when they are appointed. I am not saying they do not have the right to do that. The Minister Assisting the Treasurer, who is listening closely to my remarks, appointed some people to his office who clearly have a political background together with the skills they have undoubtedly acquired and the confidence of the minister.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Some have and some don't.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I would be interested to know which staff the Minister Assisting the Treasurer has appointed in his office do not have the skills needed to do the job. Perhaps he can respond in a moment, because I have limited time.

The nature of those appointed as ministerial chiefs of staff and to other terms-of-government appointments among ministerial advisers is a matter for those ministers. However, when the spectre of possible political appointments casts its shadow over the appointments to professional, long-term positions in the public sector, especially those of senior executives, it is proper for this House to express its concern. I am sure it would be of great comfort to members on this side of the House, and to the public generally, if we were to obtain an undertaking from this Government that it will not do what it did the last time it had the reins of power; that is, parachute a whole lot of its mates into many of the top jobs of the public sector, having got rid of the professional and impartial public servants that it had. Judging from comments in the Press by people such as Community and Public Sector Union Acting Secretary Toni Walkington, I believe she would be reassured to hear that the public service will not be reduced. I say that because in a story written by Wendy Pryer in *The West Australian* on 19 May, Toni Walkington was quoted as saying that 100 staff of the Department of Resources Development were offered redundancies in a merger with the Department of Minerals and Energy as part of a public sector restructure. What is the truth? It appears that 100 people from a comparatively small department were offered redundancies. These are not the fat cats that the Australian Labor Party occasionally and happily refers to; they are public servants with a great deal of expertise and experience. They too, I am sure, would like to know how deeply the razor will be drawn across staffing levels in this State.

In *The Australian* on Friday, 4 May, a Western Australian correspondent, Roger Martin, reported on the speculation that the reforms currently afoot would cost 5 000 jobs. He attached credence to the suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition, Colin Barnett, that at least 5 000 jobs in the public sector were facing the chop.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Under him.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It could hardly be under him, because he is no longer in charge. The Minister Assisting the Treasurer must understand - and we on this side of the House will do our best to help him come to grips with the fact - that he must provide some substance to the ready retorts that he provides to the House. He must provide accountability - another favourite word of his and some of his colleagues - in connection with what he and his cabinet colleagues propose to do.

The Opposition managed to get a tiny amount of information from the minister and some of his colleagues during question time. I was able to establish that the minister believes I am a rumour monger. He even got a little testy with me when he said there will not be wholesale cuts to government services across the board.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: There won't.

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Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: If that is the case, well and good. However, I assure the minister that I am not a rumour monger on this matter. I am reporting what has been brought to me and my colleagues and I am trying to reflect the concerns which the constituents, including government and non-government agencies and their representatives, brought to the Opposition and asked it to raise in this forum. That is not rumour mongering; it is asking the Government to cough up and get rid of uncertainty. Uncertainty not only hangs over the heads of the public service employees to whom I have alluded, but it also has a ripple effect across the whole of the community. Members of the community, whether they be in the disabled sector, the volunteer bush fire brigades, the cadets or wherever, have uncertainty hanging over their heads as to the future that life holds for them under a Labor Government which is prepared to slash the public sector.

HON CHRISTINE SHARP (South West) [3.57 pm]: I support the urgency motion. I am also aware, as a result of travels in the south west electorate, of the serious community concerns about the overall outcome for the community of the results of the Machinery of Government Taskforce and the Government's proposals to amalgamate 46 departments, thereby reducing them to 23. For example, I was at a dinner on Friday evening in Harvey, a small but vibrant community in the south west. In the recent past Harvey lost its post office, had its high school downgraded so that the local district high school no longer offers tertiary entrance examination subjects to years 11 and 12, and is now subject to widespread rumours that the local agriculture office will be a victim of the proposals coming through the Machinery of Government Taskforce. There is therefore definite concern out there in the community.

I do not know whether I agree with the exact wording of the motion. My concern is not so much that there is a lack of direction from the Government but that it is taking a horribly directed and pointed approach. This is the first test to indicate whether the new Labor Government will take an economic rationalist approach to the role of government and the role of the public service, or whether it will take a more humanitarian view of the role of the public service. I hope it will not fall for the ideology that the role of government is to minimise services and facilitate the invisible hand of the market to somehow support and provide services out in the community.

It was interesting to listen to Mr Peter Thompson in Nannup a few weeks ago. He was at university with Premier Geoff Gallop and Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair. He talked about the role of social entrepreneurship. He suggested that communities must organise their own health and education services and so on, and that they are expected to develop more and more of their own momentum in these matters. I have a very strong philosophical disagreement with that. We should have a very clear view in our minds of what basically is the role of government. In my mind, and in the minds of my Greens colleagues, the role of government is to provide strategic direction in our society, to provide protection for those things that the community thinks are important, and to provide the services that underpin that. Therefore, we are watching with real concern what the overall spin-off will be from the Machinery of Government Taskforce.

One area that we will examine very carefully is the proposed changes to the environment departments. In the statement the Premier made in the other place on 3 May, I note that on conservation and the environment he simply said that new departmental arrangements for the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Water and Rivers Commission are to be determined. Therefore, I take it that a review of how those departments are to be organised and the flow-on effects of the changes are still in the melting pot, and we will have to wait to see the results.

I thank the Opposition for the opportunity to add the concerns of the Greens (WA) about this matter. We will be alarmed if this means any more serious cuts to those environment departments, particularly when it is put in the context of the recent history of those departments. For example, in the past two budgets, the Department of Environmental Protection has suffered a 22 per cent reduction in its working budget. It is amazing that its doors are still open. In fact, I am told that the doors of the DEP office in Kalgoorlie are closed, because staff have been relocated to Perth. That is even more recent than those 22 per cent cuts to which I have just referred.

I noted in the weekend newspapers some reported comments by the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, who I note is leaving the public service. He said that 120 redundancy packages for senior staff are going through that department at the moment. If all those redundancy packages are finalised, that will involve something like 10 per cent of the staff of that department. That is extraordinary stuff. I am aware that, in the past, CALM's budget has basically been propped up by timber royalties. We know that 72 per cent of the department's direct income in past years has come from logging native forests. Included in that 72 per cent figure are the many grants that CALM receives from the Commonwealth Government for biodiversity and conservation programs. CALM's self-generated revenue was as high as 90 per cent from logging forests. With the Government's new and more enlightened policy on the management of our state forests, that money must be made up elsewhere. Clearly, it must be made up by an allocation from government to recognise that throughout the community of Western Australia there is almost universal recognition that we live in an area of huge significance for conservation, not only for Australia but also globally, and that we have international responsibilities in that regard.

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Furthermore, new arrangements for the Department of Conservation and Land Management went through this place last year. One of the issues involved in the CALM amendment package was the establishment of a new Conservation Commission, which I believe has vested in it 22 million hectares of public land in this State. However, do members know that the annual budget for that commission last year was \$650 000? I want to know what the direction of the new Government will be on the role of the Conservation Commission. Will it have staff and scientists? Will it be given the kinds of resources it needs to carry out the responsibilities that have been vested in it under the new arrangements, which, despite argument over the detail, basically had the support of all parties in this Chamber?

Although it is not clear to us exactly what direction is being taken in all this - I take it that was Hon Simon O'Brien's point - we are hearing in the community that there are real concerns, and we fear that all this is just the beginning of a serious turn towards a further economic rationalist approach to our public service. We hope that we are misreading the signals and that there will be a full and committed public service for the future of this State.

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural) [4.06 pm]: I thank Hon Simon O'Brien for moving this motion about the public service. This matter has a very wide-ranging effect. I refer to super ministries, which is the bottom line of the issue. The real danger is that ministers will lose control of the way the public service and their ministries are run. That is the crucial issue. Treasury will once again - I say this advisedly - rule the roost. In fact, the money will be given to the super ministries, and on some occasions it will be divided up in a manner that will not reflect the way in which it was raised. Within transport, I know now that the road funding comes back from the federal Government through what is called the goods and services tax fund. A substantial amount, 8.1c a litre, will come back from the fuel franchise levy. I wonder exactly where that will be spent in the future. It would be unethical if that money were not spent on roads. The \$41 million that comes back as a road maintenance allowance should also be spent on roads. At a time when the structure is put in place, I would be happy if this House adopted a 10.6c a litre arrangement whereby that funding went directly back to roads through the transport fund, and that went hand in hand with registration fees.

The top of the public service will be decimated. There are already moves in transport to shift people to suit the arrangements that will put these things in place. That has sent shivers through the whole public service in that area. When I was Minister for Transport, the Government adopted some changes that restructured the organisation. That was required and it is working very well. Now there is the likelihood of another revamp. Understanding is needed in that area.

I will deal briefly with regional areas. I wonder what will be the impact on regional development commissions and the people and personnel in country areas. Will we see a cut in those areas? In the areas I have visited, whether it be the wheatbelt or the north west, there are real concerns. I am sure that Hon Tom Stephens would like to hear some of the concerns of people in the north of the State.

Another issue that needs qualifying and quantifying is the amount of money that will be required for redundancies in this area. The Premier has spoken about the savings that will be made. However, I would like to know the total cost of redundancies right across the board. Later I will ask a question about the Agriculture Protection Board and its future, and about the research stations that are under review. One wonders just what will be the impact on those in the future and what sorts of cutbacks will be made in that area.

The core function of Governments revolves around health, law and order and education. There should be no diminution of their responsibilities in those areas. However, when we see the likelihood of cuts - there is a real concern in the public service about its future - we must show due concern. I thank the member for moving this motion.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [4.11 pm]: What a truly amazing motion this is! What a stunner! It comes from a party which, during its eight years in government, dumped thousands of public sector jobs. The member is talking about some uncertainty created by the management-initiated redundancy scheme, which involves all of 60 people.

Hon N.F. Moore: Rubbish!

Hon KIM CHANCE: Members of the former Government dumped thousands of jobs when they were in government; yet they have the nerve to say that we are creating uncertainty because we have initiated a redundancy scheme involving 60 people.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the House may address the Chair and not encourage other members.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I looked at the calendar to make sure it is not 1 April, and it is not, so there must be some other reason. Perhaps the conservative parties have this new bad taste day, which is the most reasonable way of

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explaining it. They talk about uncertainty, but when in government they kept changing the rules. They changed not only the public sector management rules but also the whole industrial relations structure, so that people who worked for the Government no longer had any security at all. Members opposite allowed a situation to develop in which a level 4 officer working in one particular component of the public sector could earn \$14 000 more or less than a level 4 government employee in another agency, simply because of the way they allowed agencies to trade freely in their own work force. We must do something to sort that out. That is another burden we have been left to carry.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You can get different incomes for officers on the same level with different jobs.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is the same level.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Simon O'Brien has a right of reply if the minister can make his comments.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is the same level but a different agency. Officers could no longer be transferred between agencies. The former Government took all the flexibility out of the public sector. This is not just my view. I took the trouble, which Hon Simon O'Brien obviously did not, of calling the union that represents the public sector. I spoke to the representative from the Civil Service Association and the Community and Public Sector Union. When I read to him Hon Simon O'Brien's motion, he was speechless; he could not believe what he had heard. He said to me that after eight years of what those "expletive deleted" did to us, they have the nerve to move a motion like this. He could not believe it.

I take particular exception to one thing that Hon Simon O'Brien said, and it is very rare that I take exception to Hon Simon O'Brien; his speeches are generally superb.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Sorry; I had a cold today.

Hon KIM CHANCE: On one occasion during his speech - I apologise if I do not get it exactly right - he implied that we were filling ministerial offices with political appointees. That is something to which I need to respond quite seriously.

Hon N.F. Moore interjected.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I thought he said ministerial offices and if he did not, I will retract that.

Hon Simon O'Brien: I did, but I said that that was understandable.

Hon KIM CHANCE: To clarify that, we have slashed the number of staff in ministerial offices; not only are there three fewer ministerial offices -

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon KIM CHANCE: It gives me the opportunity to skate a bit. The average turnaround on the mail in my office is currently 27 days. We are aiming for 21 days. Sometimes we take a little longer; sometimes we take less time. Under the previous Government, I cannot remember receiving a reply from any minister in less than a month and a half, and that was from only one minister - Hon Cheryl Edwardes, who was a superb minister in the turnaround of her correspondence. Generally it took two months. It regularly took four months to receive an answer to a question on notice from Hon Monty House, and sometimes as long as six months. Members opposite should not lecture me or my colleagues about ministerial efficiency.

Hon N.F. Moore: You should talk to the public about your colleagues. I said the other day that you might be efficient, but your colleagues are not.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I believe my colleagues are, particularly those in this place.

Hon N.F. Moore: People cannot get an appointment to see anybody.

Hon KIM CHANCE: My colleagues are very efficient and set a standard to which the former Government could not hold a candle.

To be constructive, the Government is committed to a strong public sector. It recognises that the strength of the public sector lies with the employees of that sector. In our pre-election policy statement "Delivering a better government", we gave a commitment to rebuilding and maintaining a strong state public sector.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why are you frightening them all to death?

Hon KIM CHANCE: We stated that we expect the public sector to be an effective, efficient and strategically focused platform for the implementation of government policy. Hon Simon O'Brien referred to the slashing of government agencies. This State, with a relatively small economy and only 1.8 million residents, has 49 agencies headed by chief executive officers.

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Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Will you tell us why?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not know why. Victoria, with an economy around three times the size of ours, has eight CEO-headed agencies.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Are you following the Kennett line?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Obviously, Mr Kennett made those changes when he was Premier. I will point out one fact that emerges from those two figures: every Monday morning the Premier of Victoria can sit in an average-sized room and meet with every one of his CEOs. Our 49 CEOs would never have done that in the State's history. How does a Government reflect any sense of government direction through its agencies? It cannot. I am not saying that we should go as far as reducing the number to eight agencies, but halving the number of CEO-headed departments is a reasonable proposition.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is a populist view.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The member can say that, but it will work.

Hon Ray Halligan: The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Sadly, I am running out of time. However, I acknowledge that this is a time of change and, of course, there is always some disquiet. I am not saying that Hon Simon O'Brien is entirely inventing all of this. There is always some disquiet about how these changes will be reflected within the public sector, given that the machinery of government review has been under way for about three months and we expect it to report very soon.

It is reasonable for a new Government to review the way the public sector delivers executive services. The Civil Service Association of Western Australia has told me, acknowledging that there has been some disquiet, that at least it now has some confidence in a plan of some kind and this Government is heading in a particular direction. The CSA will never agree with everything this Government does and says, but this morning when I told members of that organisation about this motion they said that at least they had confidence that there was a plan, and that at least this Government would sit down and talk through the changes. In the past eight years that organisation has not been able to sit down with the Government and talk through the process of change. Opposition members may disagree. The view of the CSA is that it could not speak to the previous Government about the process of managing change and now it can; it acknowledges that - although it will not agree with everything we do - at least it feels it is in the loop.

HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan) [4.21 pm]: I will read the honour roll. Bob Fisher from Family and Children's Services was appointed Agent General in London. Within days of the change of government, Haydn Lowe was removed from his position in the Aboriginal Affairs Department and recently accepted a government-initiated retirement package. Gary Prattley from the Ministry for Planning accepted a position with the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board. That board head-hunted Gary Prattley because he happened to be one of the best administrators in his field. He left the State at Easter time. I asked him why he accepted that position, and he said, "I think the position in Western Australia has more exciting possibilities in terms of planning, but there is no future for me in this Government." Peter Browne from the Education Department - without doubt the unchallenged best Director-General of Education we have had in this State for a couple of decades - has gone. We were advised today that Wally Cox from the Department of Conservation and Land Management will leave the Government.

This Government may argue that what it is doing was originally recommended by the McCarrey review and subsequently recommended by the Commission on Government. We would argue, as Hon Kim Chance has argued, that it is inconceivable that a State the size of Western Australia should have so many chief executive officers. The Leader of the House should find out why we have so many CEOs. He will find that it rests entirely with previous Labor Governments. Let us not dwell on that but look at the -

Hon Kim Chance interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I now refer to the issue raised by Hon Christine Sharp. A report appeared in *The West Australian* on Saturday that 120 officers from the Department of Conservation and Land Management had been offered government-initiated retirement packages, 40 of whom had expressed interest and would probably leave the department by the end of June. The head of the Department of Conservation and Land Management said that this was necessary because of a direction that expenditure in his department must be cut by six per cent - that is in addition to anything that may be contemplated by the committee of inquiry into the

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reorganisation of government, and in addition to anything recommended in the McCarrey report or by the Commission on Government.

This means not only a reduction in personnel and a decrease in the number of jobs in the public sector, but also it inevitably means a reduction in the programs. I will refer to the consequences of a reduction in the programs in one small sector which, according to the Government, is quarantined from any budget cuts. We are told that three departments will be quarantined from budget cuts: the Health Department, the Education Department and the Police Department. We have been assured that the expenditure on those three sectors will be increased. I now turn to what some people call the Cinderella section in the Education Department, the School of Isolated and Distance Education. The three honourable doodlies - the green doodlie, the fat doodlie and the hairy doodlie - know the value of correspondence education.

A member: Very good.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I thank the member, I thought he had lost that one!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Members' applause may now cease.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: We do not applaud in this House, Mr President. Hon Tom Stephens, representing the Mining and Pastoral Region, will know the value of distance education to his constituents. The School of Isolated and Distance Education is the only means of education available to people in that region, and the alternative is to send children away from home at the age of five to attend school. It is their educational lifeline. The budget for the programs within that school are being tailored to a six per cent reduction, which will affect the programs for students who are compelled to study by distance education. These students comprise constituents from Hon Tom Stephens' electorate, those for whom reasonable daily access to an appropriate school is an impossibility; children who, because of illness or some medical affliction, are unable to attend school; girls who, because they are pregnant, are unwilling to attend school but still want an education; prisoners who are the guests of Her Majesty; and students who for whatever reason are excluded from normal schools. These students may enrol with the School of Isolated and Distance Education up to and including matriculation level. During the last tertiary entrance examinations students from that school were among the top performers - the school was equal to the best in the State.

This Government intends to quarantine education from these cuts, but has instructed the School of Isolated and Distance Education to tailor its programs within a constraint of a six per cent reduction in its current budget. Where is the quarantine?

The Leader of the House says there is no uncertainty. He spoke to his union mates and they responded in union language and told him that everybody knew what the Government was going to do because it was all laid out in its platform. We all know what the Government's platform is; we all know about the restructuring of government departments, the reduction in the number of ministers, and the reduction in the number of CEOs. However, did we know that there was to be a six per cent cut in programs - not merely a six per cent cut affecting public sector officers but a six per cent cut affecting this Government's programs? By way of illustration, the programs of the School of Isolated and Distance Education will be severely affected. Can the Government imagine the uncertainty -

Hon Kim Chance: Is the member sure he is not speculating?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I am not speculating. My sources of information are entirely reliable. The uncertainty that pervades our public sector, the malaise that is setting in within it and the deterioration in morale that is now endemic in it are due not only to the committee of review of the government sector, but also to the uncertainty about broken promises. The Australian Labor Party said it would isolate education and quarantine it from the budget cuts. What do we see? Probably the whole of the education sector is planning with considerable uncertainty for a six per cent reduction in its budget.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.