

MINISTER FOR TOURISM, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY

914. Mr R.F. JOHNSON to the Minister for Tourism; Small Business; Sport and Recreation; and Peel and the South West:

I refer to Labor's accountability and integrity in public life policies, which both state that Labor recognises that being a minister of the Crown demands the highest standards of probity, accountability and integrity in the exercise of their public duties, and I further refer to the essential requirement that public confidence be maintained in each minister. Is the minister prepared to make a public statement conceding that his manner towards and statements to whistleblower Jean Thornton at his meeting with her on 17 October could be perceived by Ms Thornton and other whistleblowers as intimidating and that he will undertake not to conduct himself in a similar fashion in his role as Minister for Tourism, Small Business, Sport and Recreation and Peel and the South West?

Point of Order

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Premier is the Minister for Public Sector Management. I am the Minister Assisting the Minister for Public Sector Management, so the question could have been directed to me. Of course, the Premier can take a question on any matter across government. The question does not relate to the portfolios of the Minister for Small Business, Sport and Recreation, Tourism and Peel and the South West. It relates to public sector management. If there is a particular issue of public sector management, as there seemed to be in the question, it does not relate to the minister's portfolio; it relates to the health portfolio, for which he does not have responsibility. On that basis, under standing orders the question cannot be asked of the Minister for Small Business and other portfolios.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The question relates to the minister's responsibility as a minister of the Crown and his responsibility in his current capacity as the Minister for Small Business and Tourism. What we are seeing is a pathetic attempt to protect this minister.

The SPEAKER: It is quite plain that any question directed to the Minister for Tourism, Small Business, Sport and Recreation and Peel and the South West about those portfolios is quite appropriate. However, the question becomes borderline in relation to the comments about the minister's former role as the Minister for Health. The part of the question about how the minister will conduct practices under his current portfolios is in order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I am well aware of my accountability responsibilities under the Public Sector Management Act, as the Premier has often pointed out. While I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Western Australian Small Business Development Corporation. Some 160 small businesses came to Matilda Bay this morning and expressed their views about issues of red tape in government and of working together with various agencies. I was very pleased to see some of the inroads that are now being made with red tape and small business issues in this State. I commend the Small Business Development Corporation for its initiative this morning. I also commend those small business people who attended the meeting and gave us some clear guidance on some of the changes that need to be made in the future.

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The answer given by the minister had no relevance to the question I put to him. It was a very simple question about whether he would behave in the appropriate way and not intimidate people under the portfolios he now holds.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister answered the question in relation to his knowledge of the rules that apply to his current portfolios.

Questions without Notice Resumed