WESTERN POWER, WANGARA INDUSTRIAL AREA, POWER FAILURE

2935. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Energy

I refer the Minister to the power supply disruption to the Wangara industrial area on 15 March 2004 and ask -

(a) what was the reason for the failure of the power pole that broke;

(b) when was the last time this pole was inspected;

(c) at the time, was a written report made of the status of the pole;

(d) if not, why not;

(e) what was the related fault that caused a further delay in reconnecting power to the Wangara industrial area;

(f) what was the 'higher priority' situation that arose that further delayed the repair of the main fault;

(g) what action does Western Power intend to take to ensure that the Wangara industrial area is not left without power for 5 to 6 hours again;

(h) when does Western Power intend to put this action in place; and

(i) if no action is intended, why not?

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

a) Western Power provides its suppliers with strict specifications in relation to the height and thickness of poles and accepts delivery of them based on the assumption that these specifications have been met. It is not practicable for Western Power crews to take measurements along each pole at the time of installation. The pole broke because its diameter at the break point did not meet the specifications for termination pole, the strength of the pole may have been further reduced by the 22 mm drill hole which is necessary to install a stay bolt.

b) As the pole was relatively new, there was no inspection done.

c) N/A

d) N/A

e) To minimise disruption to customers, the pole was isolated from the network for repairs, and attempts were made to feed customers from another part of the network. However, this did not work because a tap had burnt off a pole top switch at the other end of the cable. It is highly likely the tap was damaged because of the fault current created when the pole broke.

f) There was no higher priority situation

g) Western Power undertakes regular inspections of the overhead network to identify and address any maintenance issues. This is an ongoing process.

h) See (g)

i) See (g)