

WESTERN POWER, OVERHEAD POWER LINES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

145. Hon Barry House to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for Energy
- (1) Does Western Power acknowledge that it has social, economic and ethical obligations, as well as legal obligations, to private landowners when crossing their properties with overhead power lines?
 - (2) What are the relative costs of construction of -
 - (a) overheads; and
 - (b) underground power supplies in urban as well as rural areas?
 - (3) Is the Minister aware of the refusal of Western Power to construct underground power lines across Mr and Mrs Sanders' property in Bridgetown when it will place the power line underground across the neighbouring property which contains a tree plantation?
 - (4) Why does Western Power apply no economic value to the pastured land on the Sanders' property, thereby insisting on the power lines being placed overhead and paying no compensation?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

1) Western Power is obliged to extend its service to accommodate growth and development in the State, and to do so in an economic manner. When determining a line route Western Power considers cost, the impact on landowners and the environment, and social implications.

In many cases, particularly in the country, there is no option but to build overhead distribution lines across privately-owned land. The ability to do this is supported by legislation. Western Power has fulfilled all its legal obligations in respect to constructing a line across Mr and Mrs Sanders' property.

2) The cost of constructing underground lines is approximately 2 to 3 times that of overhead, depending on local conditions.

3) Western Power is prepared to construct an underground power line across Mr and Mrs Sanders property provided they meet the additional cost. This offer has been made to the Sanders.

Where the line crosses a neighbouring plantation, Western Power will construct an underground line on the basis that this is cheaper than paying compensation for loss of production.

4) The installation of an overhead line does not affect the use of pastureland and does not result in loss of production.