

WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE SERVICE, ROYAL COMMISSION

672. Mr D'ORAZIO to the Premier:

I refer to claims yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition that there is no evidence of widespread endemic corruption in the Western Australia Police Service. What evidence does the Government have of corruption to justify its decision to establish a royal commission?

Dr GALLOP replied:

I was surprised to hear the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. He has obviously locked himself into a negative position in respect of his duties as Leader of the Opposition. The Government went to the election with a commitment to establish a royal commission. I remind members of the Opposition of the basis on which it made that commitment. The first was the bipartisan upper House committee report chaired by Hon Derrick Tomlinson. The last time I saw him he was still a member of the Liberal Party and a Liberal member of the upper House of this Parliament. In his report he made it absolutely clear that there are real problems in the Western Australia Police Service. When he was asked whether there was any endemic corruption in the WA Police Service in an interview that he gave on radio station 6WF in 1996 he said -

... but there are certainly parts of the police service and sections of the police service where you could say, that it is endemic. And we would focus attention, particularly, on the Criminal Investigation Branch.

That is a quote from one of the Leader of the Opposition's colleagues in 1996. *The West Australian* got it right today when it stated that the challenge was there in 1996 but the previous Government ran away from that challenge. The previous Government ran away from so many other issues in Western Australia that needed to be addressed. That is not the end of it. The Labor Party also advocated a royal commission because of advice given to it and the Parliament by Mr Terry O'Connor, QC. He was appointed by the previous Government. He said -

... there is evidence to suggest that a not insignificant number of detectives engage in criminal or corrupt conduct.

In his evidence to the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the Anti-Corruption Commission, he said -

A large number, if not actually involved, are either incredibly naive or turn a blind eye to what is going on.

The Government advocated a royal commission into these matters because the Anti-Corruption Commission was not in a position to address the issues properly. Everyone in Western Australia now knows that what we said at the time of the formation of the ACC has come to fruition. It was not set up to deal with these issues. The Leader of the Opposition has jumped in and opposed an initiative of the Government because he is in negative mode. The evidence from the member's own side of politics, from Hon Derrick Tomlinson and from his Government's appointee, Mr Terry O'Connor QC, is that problems exist that should be addressed by a full and open inquiry, which of course a royal commission will be. Yet again we see a clear difference between the two sides of politics. On that side of the House when a problem comes along people sweep it under the carpet or at best try to ignore it; on this side of the House we confront the problems and come up with strategies for dealing with them, which is what the people of Western Australia expect from their Government.