

John Newby — Western Australian Fishing Industry Council — Adjournment Debate

HON SALLY TALBOT (South West) [5.18 pm]: I will make a few brief remarks because I know that there is at least one other member who wishes to speak in this debate. Before I refer to what I intend to speak about, I will make a couple of comments about the interjections we heard earlier in this debate from the Leader of the House. A member on this side raised a question about a considerable degree of distress that has been caused to somebody who has an association with the minister through an industry body. The minister, instead of taking responsibility, tried to suggest that there are two sides to every story. He tried to create the impression that there is a level playing field here. This is one of the big problems with this government.

I will put one point to the honourable member, because it may be something that has not occurred to him previously. This is not a level playing field. When a minister, or somebody purporting to speak for a minister, is putting a point or arguing with a member, it is not a level playing field. It is a question about the distribution of power in relationships. I am happy to have a longer conversation with the honourable member if it is something that he is interested in. When we have unequal power relationships at play, it is not a level playing field. It will be a refreshing day when we see government members, particularly ministers, take responsibility for the power that inevitably goes with their position. I will leave my comments there and move on to the issue I want to raise in this debate.