

RESOURCES SECTOR

781. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

Can the minister outline to the house how the confidence that the McGowan Labor government has been able to provide to the resources industry is delivering new investment and growth across the sector, and advise the house how this government's focus on creating jobs in the resources sector is delivering for Western Australians?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am very happy to take that question from the member for Bunbury. Of course, I draw the attention of the house to the fact that Bunbury is the centre of a major resources province in Western Australia. There is very, very significant activity in a number of industries and, most importantly, the lithium industry, with the world's largest lithium mine outside Bunbury in the state's south west. It is very good to know that last financial year, 2.1 million tonnes of spodumene was mined in Western Australia. That is a 140 per cent increase in volume and a 167 per cent increase in value from the previous financial year. Liquefied natural gas production went up to 38 million tonnes—32 per cent more than when the Liberal Party was in power. There was a record 212 tonnes of gold mined in 2016–17. The only negativity about the resources sector is in the Liberal Party. The only place we can find any negativity about the success of the resources sector under this government is on the Liberal Party benches. It is the only negativity we ever hear. There was 826 million tonnes of iron ore exported from this state. It was a record year for iron ore.

All the records are being set under this government, because we have provided stable leadership. We have worried about not just mega-projects; we have worried about every project. We have worried about not just the ten-billion dollar projects; we have worried about every single project. The member for Bateman talks about lost projects. The last eight and a half years was nearly the lost decade. We all remember the failure to land Browse—the failure to land the single largest resources project that this state has in front of it. The previous government was incapable of landing it. It told the companies what to do rather than listening to them, in exactly the same way as the last time members opposite were in opposition and they opposed the Gorgon development! The single largest development in the state's history was opposed by the Liberal Party in opposition; it voted against the legislation and it was a disgrace. Liberal Party members are still a disgrace now.

The great thing about the resources sector is that it has responded to the great opportunities provided by the stability of a strong government that is focused on the future. We are leaving the only —

Mr I.C. Blayney: Commodity prices!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is the commodity cycle. The commodities are all down, my good friend. Commodity prices are down compared with the height of the boom in 2012. The idea that it is suddenly a commodity boom is just wrong; this is about careful management by the companies themselves and good leadership by the Premier that is providing a stable environment for this state, so that the private sector can get on and invest. I hope that the Liberal Party will leave its negativity behind and celebrate the success of this government in being able to manage the resources sector in the way that it has.