

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TASK FORCE

229. Mr MASTERS to the Minister for Labour Relations:

Will the minister please advise the House of the reasons for the establishment of the building and construction industry task force and its outcomes to date?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

The building and construction industry task force was established in 1993 to monitor and require compliance with the voluntary code of practice in place for the State's building and construction industry. An aim of the code is the elimination of unacceptable industry practices, such as threats, fraud, receiving secret commissions, trespassing, and breaches of industrial relations legislation, such as that relating to freedom of association.

The task force was transferred to the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations. It comprises industrial expertise and works closely with police, WorkSafe, the Office of the Employment Advocate and the Director of Public Prosecutions. In 1999-2000, the task force investigated 122 complaints and made 505 visits to building sites across the State. It has laid 80 charges since 1993 against both employers and unions. I table a schedule of those charges.

[See paper No 325.]

Mrs EDWARDES: That schedule highlights the value of and need for the task force, as was further highlighted by events in recent weeks. Scrapping the task force, as the Leader of the Opposition plans to do, would return the construction industry to the bad old days of standover tactics, coercion and strongarm intimidation. Members opposite will hand over the construction industry and building sites to the unions.