

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, MINERAL PROCESSING PLANTS

778. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Mines:

In relation to industrial accidents in mineral processing plants in Western Australia -

- (1) Are companies required to document and inform the Department of Minerals and Energy of any workplace accidents which result in injured workers being off work for more than 10 days?
- (2) Did Western Mines report the gassing accident at the Kalgoorlie Nickel Smelter on July 29 1996 to the Department of Minerals and Energy?
- (3) Can the Minister table that documentation?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1) In accordance with Section 76(1) of the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994, the manager must inform the District Inspector of Mines, in writing, of all injuries that prevent an employee from following his or her ordinary occupation. Where such an inquiry is classed as serious, an immediate report must be made in addition to the report in writing. Injuries which result in disablement for two weeks or more are classed as serious and the category also includes unconsciousness arising from the inhalation of fumes or poisonous gases. Further to this, in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Act, the manager must notify the Department of any incidence whereby a person is affected by exposure to toxic gas or fumes. Under the terms of Section 11 of the Act, every person working in a mine must report immediately to the manager of the mine any injury or harm to health suffered in connection with work at the mine.
- (2) The incident was not reported to the District Inspector, so there is no official documentation. Inquiries by the Department of Minerals and Energy have revealed that the incident mentioned was investigated by WMC Resources and was determined to have involved steam from a slag granulating process and not toxic gas or fumes. As the person who reported the incident did not lose time as a result of an injury, the incident was not "reportable" in terms of the Act.