

PEMBERTON, SALE OF MILL HOUSES

987. Mr OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer to the Government's forest policy, which has resulted in the sale of the karri mill in Pemberton and 60 houses on the mill lease. I ask -

- (1) Has the future of these houses been discussed at a cabinet or subcabinet committee level?
- (2) Is the Premier aware that the tenants have been asked to purchase their weatherboard houses, in which some have lived for more than 25 years, for \$90 000 to \$95 000?
- (3) How does the Premier reconcile that decision with the previous Government's decision to make the houses available to tenants at reasonable prices? I am sure the Premier knows the houses are on government land.
- (4) Why, when the houses are owned by Sotico and not the State Government, is the Government involved in their sale, and who will receive the revenue?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(4) The member should have given me notice of this question. I am very keen to give him a comprehensive answer, as I do in response to all questions asked by members opposite. Government discussions on this matter are ongoing, but I am not aware of the detail. I am very happy to provide a detailed response. If the member were serious about obtaining information on this issue, he would have given me notice of the question so that I could respond appropriately. I will ensure the information is provided. However, this member is more interested in publicity stunts than in obtaining information.

Mr Barnett: You should have the guts to go south to speak to these people yourself.

Dr GALLOP: I am very happy -

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Members opposite want to talk about the state of the Western Australian economy! I am very happy to do that. We had negative growth under the coalition; we now have four per cent growth. This Government will ensure that returns from growth in Western Australia are shared fairly throughout our community - in regional areas as well as in the metropolitan area.

Several members interjected.

Dr GALLOP: I am very happy to talk to any person in Western Australia at any time about this Government's historic decision to stop the logging of old-growth forests in this State. That decision was made on behalf of future generations of Western Australians. It demonstrates that this Government -

Mr Barnett: This is about low-income earners in wooden cottages.

Dr GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition refers to low-income earners. I ask the Minister for Women's Interests to remind the House what happened to the relationship between men's and women's wages under the coalition Government.

Ms McHale: This State had the biggest gap in the nation.

Dr GALLOP: What did that show?

Mr Barnett: You do not give a damn about low-income earners. You are too busy enjoying the trappings of office and looking after the chardonnay set.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. We were going along well with limited interjections, but all hell has broken loose. I call on the Premier to bring his answer to a conclusion.

Dr GALLOP: The vulnerable, women and low-income earners were deliberately targeted by the previous Government's industrial relations policy. Their wages were pushed below standards that would be acceptable to any working person in Australia.

Point of Order

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to Standing Order No 78; that is, the answer must be relevant to the question asked.

Several members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Even some of the geese on the other side must realise that women's interests have nothing to do with this question. The question is about houses in Pemberton that are up for sale. The Premier is frightened to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is answering the question on the issue raised by the member for Warren-Blackwood. I am sure the Premier will bring his answer to a conclusion shortly.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr GALLOP: One simple statistic summarises the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House: the minimum wage under the former coalition Government was \$50 below the acceptable standard in Australia. The first decision of the Labor Government in Western Australia was to raise the minimum wage for workers.

Mr Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.