

BY-ELECTION - COST

444. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Attorney General:

Can the Attorney General advise the house how much a by-election for the seat of Capel would cost Western Australian taxpayers?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

I was amazed to hear the member for Capel on ABC radio this morning, announcing that he intended to desert us in the state Parliament and put his hand up for preselection for the Liberal Party for the federal seat of Forrest. This was his rationale -

The Liberal Party may well be fighting with itself and it may well be fighting with the National Party. And what I'm planning to do is actually minimise that and I think I can give Jim McGinty a kick in the pants, by removing one person out of that competition.

The member for Capel was elected to this Parliament a mere 16 months ago, and he is already proposing to turn his back on the people who elected him to represent them in this Parliament. The cost to taxpayers, if the member for Capel's move is successful, will be in the vicinity of \$150 000. In the past decade there have been three early resignations from the state Parliament. Each of the members resigning was the leader of a political party.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I will come back and start again, if members like.

Each of the three members who have resigned from the state Parliament in the past decade were leaders of political parties resigning in understandable circumstances, most particularly in the case of the resignation earlier this year of the Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop for reasons that everyone will understand. The only other two resignations were those of the leader of the National Party and the leader of the Liberal Party, the former Premier, Richard Court. Those are the only three resignations from this Parliament, because the view has been taken that members have an obligation -

Mr R.F. Johnson: I would like to give you a kick in the pants.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Members opposite are lining up to do it!

Historically, people have taken the very sensible view that a person, once elected, has a contract with electors that he should honour, and he should not expose the taxpayers of this state to the unnecessary expense of \$150 000, being the cost of a completely unnecessary by-election.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I hope that the member for Vasse is not doing the numbers for the member for Capel. Has he told the member for Capel he will vote for him?

Where is the old-fashioned notion of a member wanting to represent the people? What does the member for Capel want to do? It is all about internal Liberal Party fractionating; it is all about taking the pressure off within the Liberal Party; it is all about trying to avoid a brawl with the National Party; and it is all about giving someone a kick in the pants. There is not one mention of what the member can bring to the federal Parliament to assist the electors in the federal electorate of Forrest.

Dr S.C. Thomas: Read the rest of the interview.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: What would the member for Capel bring to the federal Parliament? We could not tell from what we heard on ABC radio this morning. It is all about taking the pressure off, dealing with issues internal to the Liberal Party, and factional brawls with the National Party. I am sure that the good people of the federal electorate of Forrest will be far more interested in what the member can do for them and how he will represent them than internal brawling in the Liberal Party.