

AGRICULTURE — FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

866. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Leader of the National Party:

I refer to the removal of \$10 million from the state's agricultural debt crisis package by the federal coalition government, which was given to Queensland and New South Wales.

- (1) Is the Leader of the National Party aware of any discussions between the federal Minister for Agriculture and the Western Australian government before these funds were removed?
- (2) Has he discussed this issue with Barnaby Joyce, and is there the potential to get the money reinstated?
- (3) What action has he taken or will he take to get this money reinstated for Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1)–(3) In order to ascertain the government's response, it is appropriate that the question be directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Ken Baston.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The Member for Collie–Preston's question is asking the Leader of the National Party —

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the first time. Let the minister answer and if you want to you can have a supplementary question.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The member asked whether the state government had contacted and talked to Barnaby Joyce. The appropriate person to direct that question to is Hon Ken Baston. My colleagues, particularly the member for Central Wheatbelt and the member for Moore, have taken up the decision to take \$10 million from the farm package announced by the last government with the federal Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce. Those members have written to Hon Barnaby Joyce and taken up the issue with vigour. I will go to Canberra in about a week and a half, where I intend to meet with ministers in relation to my portfolio and with Barnaby Joyce to discuss the issue the member raised, and which has been taken up vigorously by regional members in this house.