

GOLD CORPORATION — SAM WALSH

154. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to Mr Sam Walsh, a taxpayer-funded government appointee as chair of Gold Corporation, and the *Four Corners* investigation into the Perth Mint.

- (1) Why did it take so long for Mr Walsh to front the media?
- (2) Did the government advise Mr Walsh to avoid media questions and scrutiny out of fear of exposing what the government and the Premier knew, and when?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

(1)–(2) In respect of the last question, I was in Canada last week watching question time —
Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: — and I saw the Premier answering questions on his knowledge of matters. I am not quite sure; I must be expected to be a mind reader, but how I would know what Sam Walsh thinks about what the Premier said? I think I am a reasonably intelligent person, but it is not actually possible for me to answer that. Let me make it clear: the Premier has been completely transparent every step of the way on these matters. I know that that comes as a surprise, because we know that that has not been the case in the past, but I just want to emphasise that it is true that when we came to government, we thought that the Perth Mint was complying with the law. It came as a surprise to us to discover that under the former government, apparently, the Perth Mint was allowed to not comply with the law. But we are determined to get it back into the right place. That is why we are investing \$34 million into our anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing fix. That is why we are getting it to comply with its obligations under the United States code. That is why we are fixing all the problems that were left to us. What I can say about Sam Walsh is this: I was also in Japan recently and I met with the senior leadership of Mitsui. They hold Mr Walsh in great high regard. He is one of those leaders of business in Western Australia whom so many people have respect for. He is the sort of business leader Western Australia produces. If the Liberal Party and the National Party want to run down a fine outstanding Australian like Sam Walsh, that is up to them.