

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

54. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Regional Development:

Given that the minister and the Premier recommended that several approaches to them regarding funds that were made at the Narrogin regional cabinet meeting be directed to the regional development fund, and that also included headwork charges, which was a question directed to the minister -

- (1) How much money is left in the fund for distribution?
- (2) How many applications has the minister had for that fund?
- (3) If no further funds are available, when will the minister admit to those people that they are wasting their time?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

In which fund is the member asserting that no funds are left?

Hon Murray Criddle: You are directing everybody to the funds that are available. I want to know whether any funds are left.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In which fund?

Hon Murray Criddle: The regional development fund.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: My answer is as follows -

- (1)-(3) In all three funds additional funds are available annually. I am sorry that the member has not absorbed this detail until this point.

Hon Peter Foss: This will be one of those answers. We will get the full answer tomorrow.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Not at all. Each of the regional development commissions is allocated \$400 000 annually. If they chose to receive applications and to fund headwork schemes, it would be entirely up to each development commission to process an application from its region and to positively respond through the use of that \$400 000 annually for headwork schemes if it is a priority for their region.

Hon Murray Criddle: What do you say to Broome? The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure -

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are no supplementary questions.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Western Australian regional investment scheme is the second scheme to be funded. If a regional headwork scheme happens to transcend a couple of regions because of its significance and use, an applicant can make a submission for funding under that scheme, which is annually funded to the tune of about \$1.5 million. A third scheme has had only a small drawdown on it so far, the total funding of which is \$55 million. It can receive applications also for larger projects which could include regional headwork schemes applications if it so chose. There is therefore no shortage of opportunity for people to apply for headwork funding under those programs.

Hon Norman Moore: How much is left of the \$75 million?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will give the precise figure as at today's date as soon as it is made available to me. I do not have that figure at this time.

Hon Norman Moore: That has added to it the sums already committed to other projects.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It is \$75 million more than people would have had the coalition been in office. The Opposition must absorb the point that the regions have this \$75 million.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Do the opposition members resent country people? Do they not like regional Western Australians? Are they not entitled to some funding? That is what they are getting and will continue to get from us.