

EXPORTS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S PERFORMANCE

**1. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Premier:**

In June, the Premier announced that Western Australia's export performance led the rest of the nation. Is this trend continuing, and are there any issues that might threaten this position?

**Mr COURT replied:**

I thank the member for Geraldton for this question. Western Australia's export performance remains strong, and increased by 43 per cent in the three months to August. Members might recall that exports grew at a rate of around 50 per cent during the first six months of the year, which is a significant increase on the same time last year. Our export performance faces two threats.

Dr Gallop: I bet I know what one of them is.

Mr COURT: The first threat is the way in which the Federal Government decides to implement the Kyoto protocol on greenhouse emissions. A recent report shows that Western Australia, an energy-intensive State, could be detrimentally affected if a certain path is followed. The second threat is Labor's industrial relations policy.

Dr Gallop: Here we go. The same old tune since 1901.

Mr COURT: The industrial relations system in this State has been transformed. The old system was highly centralised and allowed union power. We have moved to a system of significant flexibility. Of course members opposite want to go back to what we had in the past. Mr Speaker, I do not think you were in Australia on 22 September, at the end of the first week of the Olympic Games, but that was the day on which we won significant gold in the swimming and Cathy Freeman started her Olympic campaign to win the 400 metres. The whole nation had its eyes focused on Sydney and that was also the day on which the Labor Party released its industrial relations policy. It was not released - it was sneaked out.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr COURT: Those opposite tried to hide their policy by releasing it on the one day on which this nation would not be in the slightest bit interested.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I just made a statement about question time and from that it is fairly obvious that I will allow some interjections in appropriate circumstances, but I will not allow a free-for-all across the Chamber. I remind members that those with leadership and those who have responsibilities will be given some latitude. We cannot have an episode similar to what we had yesterday.

Mr COURT: The fact is that under Labor's proposals the industrial relations system will be gutted. The workplace agreement legislation will be repealed, yet members opposite are saying to business, "You don't have to worry about what is taking place." They have the Beaufort Street boys, they call the shots, they have the numbers, and the others will do what they say.

Mr Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Peel.

Mr COURT: The fact that the union movement controls 60 per cent of the votes in the Labor Party - that is how members opposite get their preselection - means that it writes the Opposition's industrial relations policy. There is no democracy in the Labor Party. Its idea of sorting out these issues, of democracy and of industrial relations, is having a meeting around a table in Kings Park and seeing how much must be paid to shut someone up. That is not acceptable, and the Leader of the Opposition -

Mr Marlborough: You are out of touch.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Peel - I will not give too many reminders - that repetitious interjections will not be tolerated.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition has been silent on industrial relations policy. He does not want to debate industrial relations in this Parliament. Members opposite try to promote themselves as "new Labor", yet it is the same old thing.