

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

**979. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for State Development:**

The Leader of the Opposition recently stated that the Western Australian economy was going off the boil. Can the minister give a true account of the state of the Western Australian economy?

**Mr C.M. BROWN replied:**

I thank the member for Collie for that question. I noticed that comment and thought I should do some checking. Sometimes the comments of the Leader of the Opposition are not terribly accurate. I thought it would be interesting to check to see how accurate that statement was.

The gross state product figures show that growth was 3.91 per cent in 1998-99, and 2.68 per cent in 1999-2000. The coalition was in government at that time. It was also in government for seven months of 2000-01, when growth was minus 1.18 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition said the economy is going off the boil. The figures show that in 2001-02 growth was 5.74 per cent. That is a bit more than three per cent. The opposition leader does not know that five is a bit more than three! I will explain it to him. In 2002-03, the estimated growth is 4.25 per cent, and the forecast growth for 2003-04 is 4.5 per cent. Rather than going off the boil, the economic growth rate has increased during the period of the Gallop Government. It has been far higher in the two and a half years we have been in power than it was in the last three years the coalition was in power. The economy has not gone off the boil at all.

Investment declined over the last three years of the coalition Government. In 2001-02, the first full year of the Gallop Government, investment in the State increased and rebounded to \$5.5 billion. Employment growth in this State is estimated to be 2.25 per cent in 2003-04. All those figures are very positive for Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.M. BROWN: We know that the Leader of the Opposition hates this news, but unfortunately for him, they are the facts.

Let us see if Access Economics agrees with the Leader of the Opposition. It said in June 2003 when referring to Western Australia -

The current strength of investment is stunning,

Access Economics said also -

... output growth is the fastest of any State, growth in consumer spending and retail sales are solid, population growth trails only that of Queensland, the manufacturing sector is healthy too. At the same time job gains have been reasonable and, importantly, the forward indicators for jobs are far stronger than in any other State.

So much for the State going off the boil. We hear the hyperbole of the Leader of the Opposition, but this side of the House delivers the truth and the facts.