

POLICE PAY DISPUTE

454. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

I refer the minister to the ongoing police pay dispute.

- (1) Why did the minister choose to travel to San Francisco to attend the FINA World Masters Championships in swimming rather than concentrate his energies on negotiating a fair pay and conditions package for Western Australia's 5 000 police men and women?
- (2) Why did it take him more than three weeks to condemn the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union for its illegal blue flu tactic last year, when it took him less than 24 hours to criticise the Western Australian Police Union's plan to hold a legitimate, democratic protest rally at Parliament House?
- (3) Why has he resorted to bullying tactics by threatening to refuse to provide back pay for police under the conditions of any new enterprise bargaining agreement?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

- (1)-(3) I certainly respect the fantastic job done by our police and give them my full support. My support has a lot more integrity than that of the Leader of the Opposition. Because the Leader of the Opposition had a crowd at the front of Parliament House - of course, he does not have many people in his own party room; he has just a majority to listen to him - he was happy to say a lot of things that were absolutely untrue. That is this Leader of the Opposition. He has no integrity and no respect for our police. As the Premier has already said, the Leader of the Opposition has no respect for our police. He went out there just because he thought he had a sympathetic crowd. We know that from his previous attack on the police. If the Leader of the Opposition had any respect for the police who gathered at the front of Parliament House to protest and make their points, he would not have said things that were untrue. That is what he has done.

First, I will start with the Leader of the Opposition's third question. I never criticised the police for their rally.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Did you say that their back pay would be threatened in the EBA?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will come to that. I never criticised them for the rally. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that I did. He cannot tell the truth. Secondly, he said to the rally, and he referred to it in his question, that I am blackmailing the police and that they would not be back-paid. I never said any such thing.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr P.D. Omodei: Were you sneakily looking through the window?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I was listening, as could anyone in most parts of the building. The Leader of the Opposition has again been caught out not telling the truth, and, I suspect, knowingly not telling the truth. That is how little respect the Leader of the Opposition has for our police. He will not even tell them the truth.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: I am sure that the minister can think of words other than those he is using about the truth in relation to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. I direct the minister to withdraw his comment about the Leader of the Opposition not telling the truth.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition said things in his question and in the comments he made at the front of Parliament House that I totally reject because they are things about me that I never said. The Leader of the Opposition claims that I said them. He is totally wrong.

I turn now to the first question. The world masters swimming championships, which will be held in Perth in April 2008, will be the largest sporting event ever held in this state. I want to make sure that it is a success. I knew before I went that a timetable had been set and that my trip to promote Western Australia would in no way delay reaching a conclusion on the police pay negotiations.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Hadn't a decision already been made that it would come here?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Yes, but I wanted to make sure that 10 000 rather than 5 000 people would attend.

Mr P.D. Omodei: You went over on a junket; you didn't give a damn about the people in Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The opposition likes to drag down our state but the government wants to promote it. People can see the good things happening here. The FINA Masters World Championships to be held here in 2008 will be a great success.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It will be a great success because the government wants to make sure it is well planned and well implemented. My visit to San Francisco to encourage people to come to Western Australia was one way of helping to ensure that that event will be a great success in 2008.