

MEMBER FOR MURCHISON-EYRE - RESIGNATION FROM MINISTRY

Statement by Premier

MR A.J. CARPENTER (Willagee - Premier) [4.13 pm] - by leave: A short while ago I met with the member for Murchison-Eyre and demanded his resignation from the cabinet and from the state Parliamentary Labor Party. He has agreed to provide both. I did this because evidence before the Corruption and Crime Commission shows that he has engaged in conduct that is indefensible. The member for Murchison-Eyre has seriously compromised the integrity of the cabinet, the government and the Parliament in his dealings with Julian Grill and Brian Burke. As Premier, I cannot accept that behaviour. The hearings of the CCC in the past few weeks have revealed conduct by individuals in state government, in local government and in the business community that is completely and utterly unacceptable. At the centre of all this have been the activities of Brian Burke and Julian Grill. Their conduct and their influence, and the way they exert it, have a malignant effect which has to be stopped. They have to be stopped, and I intend to stop them. As bad as their conduct has been, it does not excuse the behaviour of others. People must accept responsibility for their own actions. Brian Burke and Julian Grill can have this influence only if people allow them to have it. They should not allow them to have this influence; it is as simple as that. Personal loyalties, political acquaintances and friendships are no excuse. The public interest must always prevail. As I have demonstrated repeatedly now, I will not back away from doing what is required to protect the integrity of government in this state. I will continue to demand the highest standards from my ministers. It is what the people of Western Australia expect of me. If other matters arise before the Corruption and Crime Commission that require the same sort of action I have taken today, then I will act. I told the member for Murchison-Eyre that, in my view, he should also leave the Parliament. However, that is a matter for him and his constituents.

MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Leader of the Opposition) [4.16 pm]: In responding to the Premier's Statement, I note that he read from a prepared speech. Only two hours ago the opposition sought the dismissal of the member for Murchison-Eyre from the ministry. The Premier obviously intended to do that all along, and has just sought to defend the indefensible. The facts of the matter are that he has just sacked the member for Murchison-Eyre from the ministry and the Labor Party, which is in contrast to what he did with the former member for Peel, Norm Marlborough, who was sacked from the ministry but is still a member of the Labor Party. The Premier might take some time in the near future to explain why Mr Marlborough was not sacked from the Labor Party. Is it because of his connections to people in the union movement? It seems passing strange to me that the member for Ballajura was sacked from the ministry and from the Labor Party.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: Excuse me - I was not sacked from the ministry.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I am sorry, the member for Ballajura was forced to resign, for a number of reasons, from the ministry and from the Labor Party. The member for Murchison-Eyre has just been sacked, and there is a suggestion that he should remove himself not only from the Labor Party but also from the Parliament. Then there is the member for Riverton. The question must be asked whether he should be sacked from the Labor Party if the Premier goes on this huge accountability path. We will watch with interest.

The other important thing is: what will the Premier do about the public service? Even if he removes Julian Grill and Brian Burke from their current positions, others will come up in their place. There is endemic decay in the public service in Western Australia; that has been borne out by the Corruption and Crime Commission. We must recognise that if it were not for the Corruption and Crime Commission, none of these people would be gone; they would still be sitting there in the same positions. We know that for a fact. The Premier has the problem that too many people on his side of politics owe their livelihood and their position in this parliament to Brian Burke and Julian Grill, and to nepotism within the Labor Party. The opposition will watch with very close interest. The Premier had no alternative today but to take the action he has taken. It was very predictable that we would hear the conciliatory speech saying that the government had made a mistake and was in trouble, but what else could the Premier do? There is endemic corruption and decay in the Labor Party and right to the core of government.