

NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS - PREMIER'S COMMENTS

**97. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

In the Premier's Statement of 27 February this year, he said that he would -

... introduce this year a new bill to prohibit the establishment of nuclear power stations and enrichment facilities within WA.

- (1) How does the Premier reconcile these comments with the fact that just four days ago he said that we should be quarantining uranium for the use of our own nuclear power stations over the next few decades?
- (2) Is it the case that his policy now is to oppose uranium mining, while at the same time supporting nuclear power generation in Western Australia; and, if so, where will the waste be stored?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

- (1)-(2) I suppose it is part of the to and fro of politics that this sort of stupidity masquerades as a political position. One of the things that happen when governments adopt sensible policy is that oppositions are driven to points of extreme idiocy, and that is basically what is going on here - extreme idiocy. Let us establish the ground rules here and now. Let me turn this around. I hope the people who have come a long way to Parliament today have made some assessments about the type of people sitting on that side of Parliament.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Arrogant smart Alec, they will say.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** They can make that assessment. Does the Leader of the Opposition support uranium mining and would he allow uranium mining in Western Australia if he could?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It is our known policy.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Okay; that is it. There we go. If, perchance, there were a change of government at the next election, that state government would allow uranium mining in this state as soon as possible. As long as I am the Premier of this state, there will be no uranium mining.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** But you will have nuclear power generation in the future.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Mr Speaker, remind me: where is the camera? As long as I am the Premier of Western Australia, there will be no uranium mining. What we have here masquerading as some sort of political position is a degree of idiocy and stupidity that would see students fail the most basic test of comprehension by a group of people who are forever castigating our education system and our educational achievements. It is incomprehensible how anybody with a modicum of intelligence could embrace the position that the Leader of the Opposition has apparently embraced in his question to me.

This is the situation: first, as long as I am the Premier of Western Australia, there will not be any uranium mining in this state. I believe that questions of uranium mining, like other mining, should be a matter for people in individual states. If, for example, the people of South Australia wanted to mine and export uranium, that should be a matter between them and their government. When Peter Beattie decided last week that Queensland would change its position, I believe that was a matter between the Queensland people and the Premier of Queensland.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** He just sucked the investment in uranium out of this state. Uranium mining is largely funded out of Western Australia into Queensland. The funds are raised in this state.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Has the member for Cottesloe also indicated that he thinks that Western Australia should be a nuclear waste dump site?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** No.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Is he sure about that?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Yes.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I will go back through the records. Member for Kimberley, I think he did, did he not?

**Mrs C.A. Martin** interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I think the member for Cottesloe has.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** In my view, the internal economic, social and political dynamics of South Australia are very different from those in Western Australia.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** And in Queensland.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** As they are in Queensland; they are very different. In Western Australia we do not need to mine and export uranium. There is no economic imperative. There are extremely profound environmental and safety issues that lead me to believe that Western Australia should not mine and export uranium, and I have said that over and over again.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** It is no different from any other mining. It is similar to mineral sands mining.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** If there were to be a change of government in Western Australia, and we had a pro-uranium mining government and uranium mining took place, we would then immediately be opening the door to Western Australia becoming a nuclear waste dump site.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** There is absolutely no question about that. Western Australia, because of its geography, topography, geology and demography, has been identified as one of the very best sites in the world for a nuclear waste dump. That is why when the opposition was in government, a company called Pangea Resources Australia was sniffing around and licking its lips, trying to get its foot in the door to this state to open up Western Australia as a nuclear waste dump site.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** And what happened?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** It got thrown out of government before it happened. That is why members sitting opposite in this Parliament and members of the Liberal Party in the federal Parliament are advocating exactly that. Federal and state Liberal members of Parliament are saying that Western Australia should seize the opportunity for massive windfall financial gains by allowing our state to become the world's nuclear waste dump site. Members opposite have said it over and over again. Federal Liberal members of Parliament have said it.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Federal members now, is it?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I am quite happy to bring in the quotes.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Leader of the Opposition, I will say this again: Western Australia, as opposed to the other places you have mentioned, is where we live. We get elected by the Western Australian people. The Western Australian people have indicated to me quite clearly on at least two or three occasions that they do not want uranium mining in this state.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Western Australia the landmass - not Queensland, Victoria or New South Wales - has been identified as one of the best two or three sites in the entire world for a nuclear waste dump. That is why people who are advocates of the nuclear industry are saying that Western Australia should seize the economic windfall that is waiting for us and allow the world to dump its nuclear waste in this state.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What a complete fool. Why don't you support the Western Australian mining industry? Every other state is developing uranium.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the members for Cottesloe and Vasse to order.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** It is useful to get these comments from the opposition on the record. It was just put to me then that I am a fool for not allowing uranium mining. I thought the basis of the question was that I was somehow now advocating uranium mining. I will say it again for the benefit of the public record: there will be no uranium mining in WA while I am the Premier. What we now know - it has been reiterated here again today - is that if members of the opposition get the opportunity to form a government, there will be uranium mining, and they think people who oppose it are fools. That is what they have said today. They have told all the people who have come to Perth to listen to their environmental credentials that they want uranium mining in this state and that the people who oppose it are fools. I think the question of tapping 45 gigalitres of water from Yarragadee will pale into insignificance against that monster sitting in the political background.

That is the position of this side of the house. It is quite clear. Why would we in Western Australia, with all those adverse consequences sitting out there unresolved and undealt with, allow uranium to get shovelled out the door in Western Australia? What possible gain would we make? What is so bad about a state government such as Western Australia's having a long-term strategic view in the best interests of the state? Why is that so horrific? Why does that produce this fog of war? Driven to this lunatic position, members of the opposition throw out all these ridiculous assertions that they have been throwing out since the Leader of the Opposition's press officer produced a statement about "Carpenter's backflip on uranium mining" on Friday. The very first question that was put to me was, "In the light of Peter Beattie's position, will you be allowing uranium mining in Western Australia?" My answer was a single word - no.

I do not think that I will be the Premier of Western Australia in 50 years' time.

**Mr J.A. McGinty:** I think you will.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** The member for Fremantle thinks I might be. By that stage I will be 100 years old. The European Union will be 100 years old and I will be able to make another speech about the importance of the European Union to the Western Australian economy. I look forward to it. I do not think I will last that long, but I guess it is conceivable that at the point of a gun my corpse will be kept in the Parliament and therefore this speculative position that the opposition is throwing up as something that will turn out tomorrow may well eventuate. In 50 years' time I may still be the Premier sitting in this chamber stuffed, looking a bit like Martin Landau in that great movie *Ed Wood* when he played the character of Bela Lugosi and he came upon one of the great Hollywood lines - "Pull the string, pull the string. I'm opening the nuclear power plant. Pull the string." It is conceivable. Maybe by then some sort of reassessment of the quality of our state education system will have been done and people will realise that the education system of 2007 is highly unlikely to produce a group of idiots as stupid as those who have been produced in generations that have come before us and now sit on the opposition benches of the Parliament.