

MAJOR NEW INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPACT ON PROPOSED CAPITAL WORKS

192. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Treasurer:

Will the Treasurer please outline the impact that constructing major new infrastructure, estimated to cost approximately \$4.5 billion, will have on other proposed capital works?

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER replied:

Mr Speaker, this is a serious issue.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Of course, a major capital work, such as a canal costing \$14.5 billion, would leave very little left over for other capital works projects.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Of course, current projects, such as the new Fiona Stanley hospital, the extension of Mitchell Freeway or the new performing arts centre, would be at risk. However, it is also true that everything else promised by the Liberal and National Parties in the way of capital works would be at risk if they were to be elected and proceed with this \$14.5 billion canal. For example, they could not build a canal and also provide the Maitland industrial estate infrastructure costing between \$480 million and \$500 million, as promised by the member for Cottesloe; they could not build 39 desalination plants in the wheatbelt costing \$237 million, as promised by the Nationals; and they could not sink the freeway along the South Perth foreshore. However, perhaps that is a wrong example, because although the silly promises of the member for Cottesloe still count, I suppose the silly promises of the member for Kalgoorlie are no longer operative. The opposition could not dig a trench from the Kimberley to Perth and at the same time increase spending on the environment, as promised by the coalition; they could not provide underground power, as promised by the Liberals; they could not increase the size of Busselton District Hospital, as promised by the Liberals; and they could not restore the Donnelly mill, as promised by the Liberals.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The member for Vasse should not have interjected, as his record on finances is deficit denial and a lack of integrity. That is his record. The member for Cottesloe has a vision, and even the morning after, the vision still burns in his mind. Unfortunately, the only thing the member for Cottesloe will set fire to will be the state's finances. He still thinks that the canal is a good idea; he said so yesterday.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The shadow Treasurer, who is interjecting again unwisely, really has a problem, because he should say whether he still supports the member for Cottesloe's visionary project. Does the shadow Treasurer still support the Leader of the Opposition's dream on this matter? Is he factoring a \$14.5 billion project into the opposition's financial plan?

Mr T.R. Buswell: I cannot answer because my mind is full of our vision of you on the morning after!

Several members interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: That is an erudite answer! That is an answer from a politician of substance and integrity! I know what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would do. Most likely he would change his mind when the crunch came. That is his record. However, he is not the only one with a problem. The opposition leader also has a problem. He needs to decide whether, in the pursuit of defending the mistakes of the member for Cottesloe, he will throw away the next election like the member for Cottesloe threw away the last one.