

MUJA POWER STATIONS

223. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Energy:

I ask a supplementary question. Why did the minister pour \$330 million down the drain rather than invest in a long-term alternative industry in Collie?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

The money was spent on refurbishing Muja A and B. That is something that the member supported regularly, and now he is criticising us for it! The member for Collie–Preston repeatedly argued for the reopening of Muja A and B. Did you not, member?

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn! Through the Chair, please; quick answer.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The simple fact is that the member for Collie–Preston never wanted the plant to be mothballed in the first place. He argued, quite rightly, that it be brought on to rescue the state and Varanus Island, and then argued repeatedly that it should be brought on and refurbished. There is no doubt that the refurbishment cost a lot more than expected, but the act of refurbishment was supported by the member for Collie–Preston all the way down the line.

Mr M.P. Murray: Come down to Collie and speak to the Collie community!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I think the member should do that. He should explain why he is now arguing that we should close down Muja A and B forthwith. I remind him that Muja A and B is one of, if not the most, profitable plant in Synergy's mix. I might add—this is a little secret for the other side—that if Mr Shorten became Prime Minister, God help us, most of our coal would be shut down due to his 50 per cent renewable target by 2030. The Labor Party is the enemy of coal, not us.