

WESTERN POWER, EXPENDITURE ON TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION IMPROVEMENTS

214. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the minister representing the Minister for Energy:

- (1) In the minister's answer to question without notice 195 yesterday he stated that Western Power would spend \$950 million on transmission and distribution improvements during the next four years.
 - (a) In what areas will this be spent;
 - (b) what works will be done; and
 - (c) will the minister table the program of works?
- (2) Given that trials are still being carried out to prevent pole-top fires, what immediate solution is Western Power going to enact?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The member might commend the Government for its expenditure in this area and at the same time apologise for what effectively amounted to a call for a cut in expenditure by Western Power because he was calling for a figure that was lower than the allocation that Western Power was making.

Hon Kim Chance: He wants to cut maintenance.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He was calling for a figure that was lower than that allocated.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members need not practise for the Assembly.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The minister's answer is as follows -

- (1)
 - (a) Western Power has plans for capital expenditure throughout the south west interconnected system. Although significant funds will be directed to the Perth metropolitan area and major regional centres such as Mandurah to match the growth needs of dense populations, targeted investment will also occur in country areas. In addition to enhancement of the capacity of the network, other expenditure will be made to improve reliability and performance of existing assets, and to address safety-related issues.
 - (b) The program of works will not be finalised until after the state budget is announced.
 - (c) The broad program of works is published annually on the Western Power web site.
- (2) The silicone-coating trials are effectively complete other than the finalising of reports. Western Power has already started a program of silicone-coating overhead lines using current technology and has completed vulnerable sections of five coastal feeders. It will embark on a further eight feeder sections over the next three to four months and will continue the program, at a cost of \$1.5 million to \$2 million per year, giving priority to lines which, according to statistics, are most affected by pole-top fires.