

COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC SECTOR STANDARDS - REPORT ON CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

886. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

Yesterday, as Minister for Public Sector Management, the Premier refused to answer questions about allegations that his ministers had been attempting to illegally interfere with public sector employment decisions, just as the Premier ignored warnings about Norm Marlborough when he made him part of cabinet.

- (1) Has the Premier now read the findings of the report of the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards?
- (2) Which ministers were involved, who were they trying to get jobs for, and who was pulling the strings?
- (3) Can the Premier guarantee this house that he will take strong and swift action against the responsible ministers?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

(1)-(3) I thank the member for the question. I have read extracts - not cover to cover, but extracts - of the report. I have also sought the advice of the director of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the report. That advice states in part -

- Since the introduction of the PSM Act in 1994, two separate breaches of these sections are known to have been investigated and found by the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards.
- In 1995 an independent investigation was commissioned by the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner and undertaken by Mr Donald Doig into matters associated with the removal of two senior officers from within the Health Department. Mr Doig's report (the Doig Report) found that the then Commissioner of Health was in breach of section 8(2) of the PSM Act but that he "did so under considerable pressure from the (then) Minister for Health" Mr Graham Kierath.

The second breach that has been identified occurred in 1999. The advice states -

- In 1999 the then Commissioner for Public Sector Standards, Mr Don Saunders, undertook an investigation into the Department of Agriculture. In his report outlining the investigation, the Commissioner found, among other things, that:
 - there was communication between employees in the Office of the Minister for Primary Industry and the CEO of Agriculture WA, about the appointment of a person to the public sector; and
 - the CEO of Agriculture WA did not comply with section 8(2) of the PSM Act.

Mr Wauchope's advice goes on to say -

- It has been confirmed with the current Commissioner for Public Sector Standards, Ms Maxine Murray, that she is not aware of any other breaches found by her Office in relation to sections 8 and 105 apart from the examples highlighted.

As to what appropriate disciplinary action I might take, the public has already exacted its disciplinary action on Mr Kierath. I believe I am in no position to exercise any disciplinary action over the then CEO of the Department of Agriculture or the then minister.