

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT, EXPENDITURE BY MINISTERS

1. Mr R.F. JOHNSON to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to his Ministerial Code of Conduct, which states -

Ministers must make economical use of the public resources which are made available to them as office holders and will make every endeavour to prevent misuse by other persons.

- (1) How does the Premier reconcile the guidelines of the code of conduct with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services spending \$6 300 on restaurant meals and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure spending \$3 000 on parliamentary refreshments, as was reported in *The West Australian* of 22 March 2003?

Mrs M.H. Roberts: We know why the Leader of the Opposition is not asking this question.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Just because you did nothing in Government but sit there -

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The minister will be called to order in a minute.

Mr A.J. Carpenter: You had your snouts in the trough.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member is a very funny man.

Mr C.J. Barnett: There are a lot of interjections at the moment.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am obviously embarrassing them.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I continue -

- (2) The Premier's circular on expenditure on official hospitality, dated 29 August 2001, directs that working meals should -

be of a simple standard involving low charges per head eg sandwiches, fruit and tea/coffee;

Are ministers who regularly dine at places such as Perugino Restaurant, Zafferano Restaurant, Altos Restaurant and Frasers Restaurant meeting the guidelines of that circular?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the member for Collie and the Minister for Education and Training.

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(2) The current Government came to power with a very clear objective: to reduce the amount of money that is spent on ministerial offices. We did this firstly by reducing the number of ministers. All the money that has been saved from that has gone into health, education and police systems. Secondly, we said that we would reduce the benefits associated with being a minister. As members know, we reduced the car fleet. Again, the money saved from that has gone into core service delivery in Western Australia.

I find it extraordinary that the Opposition has asked this question. The Leader of the Opposition, when he was a minister, spent \$5 000 plus on alcohol in one year. The entertainment budget of the former Minister for Labour Relations, the former member for Riverton, for one year was \$20 000. That sort of thing does not happen in government any more. The inquiries that were conducted by *The West Australian*, which were then published in the newspaper, clearly indicated that this Government has done exactly what it said it would do; that is, reduce the expenditure on these items and ensure that any expenditure is justifiable. All my ministers conduct themselves properly in their offices.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, they don't.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Which one does not?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Minister for Police and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: On what basis does the Leader of the Opposition reach that conclusion?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Spending \$6 000 at restaurants and \$3 000 at the bar at Parliament House is unsustainable. It is not on.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: It is not on, is it not? What does the Leader of the Opposition spend in his office? This is interesting. If he says that that is not on, what does he spend in his office?

Mr C.J. Barnett: There are proper functions of ministers.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: What does the Leader of the Opposition spend? Would he be willing to put his accounts on the table, as we must do under freedom of information? Ministers have a function to perform. Every minister in this Government performs those functions properly, and they do it within the framework of the Government's ministerial code of conduct. It is an embarrassment that the Opposition has raised this issue, given the money that this Government has saved since it has been in office. I find it extraordinary that the Opposition has raised such an issue. We have reduced the amount of money spent on ministerial offices, we have brought back control over expenditure on items such as refreshments and entertainment in our offices, we have reduced the ministerial car fleet, we have reduced the number of ministers, and we are spending that money where it matters for the people of Western Australia. It is a complete embarrassment for the Opposition that it has raised such an issue.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Kalgoorlie for the second time.