

URANIUM EXPORT AGREEMENT - AUSTRALIA-CHINA

**82. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

I refer to the signing of a uranium export agreement yesterday between the Australian and Chinese governments and to the subsequent decision by Premier Beattie to now allow uranium mining in Queensland.

- (1) Will the Premier drop his opposition to uranium mining in Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Premier stop penalising potential uranium producers in this state?
- (3) Will the Premier now join Peter Beattie in the modern world and allow the mining industry to add uranium to the state's already impressive portfolio of mineral exports?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

(1)-(3) I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. A very interesting debate is occurring in Australia at the moment. There was some focus provided to it by the visit of Chinese Premier Wen to Western Australia, Canberra and Sydney. This is the situation: when we went to the last election we had a range of policies; a policy agenda. One of the policies was that we would not allow the mining of uranium in Western Australia. The people of Western Australia elected us on that basis. The issue was given some prominence during the election campaign. In fact, former Premier Gallop raised the issue in his introductory remarks in the now infamous televised debate between the member for Cottesloe and him. He raised the issue of uranium mining then. We were elected on the basis that we would not allow uranium mining in Western Australia. Subsequent to that there has been some controversy and discussion at the national and state levels. The issue was raised at the Labor Party state conference in October or November. As I recall, I was sitting at the front table with the then Premier. The motion supporting our policy position was carried unanimously - although there was one voice of dissent at the time. It was overwhelmingly supported. That is the position on which we stand. If the people of Western Australia had wanted us to have a policy otherwise, they would not have supported the policy during the election campaign. It is very interesting that the federal government is now speculating about ways it could override the states to force them to allow the mining of uranium in states like Western Australia. Would the leader of the opposition support the commonwealth coming in?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** No, I do not, but I think the Premier should see what his fellow Premiers and colleagues -

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** He thinks I should but he would not support the commonwealth coming in and overriding the states on that issue! Does the Leader of the Opposition support the commonwealth coming in and overriding us on industrial relations?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Why do you not just ask me a formal question and I will give a full answer?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Part of being in Parliament is being able to exchange comments on issues across the chamber. I am on my feet and I will ask a question. Does the Leader of the Opposition support the commonwealth's attempts to impose its industrial relations regime? The member for Kalgoorlie did not; he showed a bit of leadership on that.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Why do you not follow your federal leader and your colleagues in the other house and agree to uranium mining in Western Australia?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Because our policy is that we will not allow the mining of uranium. It is pretty straightforward, is it not? That is what we on this side all got elected on.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What does the share market have to say about that?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Do the sharebrokers elect us to Parliament? It is the ordinary citizens of the state who elect us to Parliament.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Why is it that you support uranium mining in Australia but not in Western Australia?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I do not support the mining of uranium in Western Australia. The issue of whether it is mined in, or exported from, other parts of Australia is not one for our jurisdiction. To be consistent, if we were able to run the national government, that would be fine, but we do not have that capacity.