

FOOD LABELLING LAWS

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

I refer the Premier to his ongoing indecision and recent responses to questions on food labelling.

- (1) Will he acknowledge that food labelling is the responsibility of the state government under the Health Act; and, if not, why not?
- (2) Given the public demand, will he move to immediately introduce comprehensive food labelling laws in Western Australia?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(2) What an extraordinary question. Who is setting the agenda for the opposition? First, this Parliament a few weeks ago set up, as a result of a unanimous decision -

Mr M.J. Birney: You were dragged kicking and screaming.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Kicking and screaming?

Mr M.J. Birney: You have done nothing about it.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: We were very happy to enter into the discussion.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: There is more to it than that.

Mr M.J. Birney: You have obviously read *The West Australian*.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Is that all the Leader of the Opposition reads? If he wants to be educated, he should read more than *The West Australian*. There is a body called Food Standards Australia New Zealand, of which the Leader of the Opposition will be aware. It is a federal body whose role is to set mandatory labelling codes in Australia. We support mandatory country of origin labelling. Our minister has made it clear at those meetings. The government that is hesitating and delaying on this matter is the federal government.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Not them again!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Look at the record.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Who is proposing that labelling laws would be properly dealt with by consumers asking shopkeepers where the products come from?

Mr P.D. Omodei: You tell us.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: He has done no homework or research on the issue at all. We support labelling, as I have made clear in this Parliament on many occasions. The federal minister is very prominent in the FSANZ framework. A Legislative Assembly committee is looking into the issue. I find it extraordinary -

Mr P.D. Omodei: You have done nothing. You could give the order straightaway, Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will give the order to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He is not to interject, and certainly not while I am on my feet.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: If the opposition were serious about this proposition, it would not have moved some weeks ago to establish a Legislative Assembly committee. The hypocrisy on that side of the house is unbelievable. It is exhibited on issue after issue that we must address in this Parliament. Our minister who is involved in FSANZ, Hon Kim Chance, has advocated mandatory country of origin labelling. Our state-based Legislative Assembly committee is looking at all the issues. We have the runs on the board. We hope that the opposition will fully support the work of the committee, as it ought to, because it unanimously supported its establishment.