

**SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE
FINANCE BROKING INDUSTRY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
MONDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2000**

SESSION 2 OF 2

Members

Hon Ken Travers (Chairman)

Hon G.T. Giffard

Hon Ray Halligan

Hon Greg Smith

Hon Norm Kelly

GODDARD, MR WILLIAM WALTER,
Member of the Real Estate Supervisory Board,
59 Napier St,
Nedlands, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: You will have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood that document?

Mr Goddard: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of this hearing, for the record. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you, and I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before speaking about the matter. Further, the committee may of its own motion resolve to take evidence in closed session. The taking of evidence in closed session may be relevant where, for example, the committee believes that the evidence may breach term of reference (3) of its inquiry, which states -

The committee in its proceedings avoid interfering with or obstructing any inquiry being conducted into related matters and in particular inquiries by -

- (a) the police;
- (b) any liquidator or supervisor of any company;
- (c) the Gunning inquiry;
- (d) the Australian Securities and Investments Commission; or
- (e) any prosecution.

However, even if evidence is given to the committee in closed session, that evidence will become public when the committee reports on the item of business to the Legislative Council, unless the Legislative Council grants an ongoing suppression order at the time the committee tables its report.

If there is any matter you wish to raise in private please advise the committee before we go into it. I invite you to make an opening statement to the committee.

I have been a member of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board for 11 years, and I have been a real estate agent for 34 years. I was born and bred in this city, and I have conducted my own business called Goddard and Goddard since 1981.

This committee interviewed one Gary Wallace on 27 September 2000. In his evidence, Mr Wallace made some serious allegations about me and, in fact, defamed me in a grand style. I deny his allegations, Mr Chairman, and I request that this committee take the matter further. In the interests of natural justice, I would like the committee to re-call Mr Wallace to give evidence to identify the investigation he referred to on page 29 of the transcript of evidence he gave to the committee. I would also like him to identify the two witnesses and produce the tape he referred to. If and when the tape is produced, I ask that it be checked by an expert for authenticity.

I put my situation to you as politicians, who are elected. So am I - I am elected to the Real Estate and Business Agent Supervisory Board by a vote of every agent in Western Australia. Like yourselves, I am coming up for re-election early next year. You can probably imagine my chances of re-election with an allegation like this hanging over my head. Even to this point, Mr Wallace has

severely damaged my reputation regarding character and integrity in this State. That is all I have to say at this time, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: To get it very clear, are you refuting the allegation by Mr Wallace -

Mr Goddard: Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN: - that you asked an investigator of the Ministry of Fair Trading to stop an investigation? Have you ever talked to an investigator about an investigation?

Mr Goddard: Investigators in years gone by came before the board in formal hearings, and the board talked to them about what they were doing from time to time. One of the problems I have always had with Mr Wallace is that I am the industry representative; therefore, I knew what Mr Wallace was doing. I know what he was really doing when he visited real estate agent offices all over Western Australia; one of the first things agents did was ring me. I immediately got a handle on what was going on.

I do not know whether I should say this, or request a close session: This real estate board received so many complaints about Mr Wallace that the board met outside the ministry's office one morning and decided, with two directors of the ministry and a couple of other senior public servants, to request that Mr Wallace be removed from the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board. That is the stage we reached as a board with Mr Wallace.

The CHAIRMAN: When was that?

Mr Goddard: It was about 1995.

The CHAIRMAN: What was the nature of the complaints about Mr Wallace?

Mr Goddard: He has a problem, and he is his own worst enemy. He has an attitude problem. The complaints I received about Mr Wallace were that he had a problem with shirt fronting people; Bruce Ruxton, the former President of the Victorian Returned Services League, did the same thing. Mr Wallace also had a very bad habit, if agents continued to give him problems, of knocking over their filing cabinets and causing an absolute ruckus in their offices in front of staff or any clients who the agent happened to have there at the time. The board considered that these things were not one-off complaints; they were ongoing. The board decided it could not handle an inspector who conducted himself like that any longer. We asked that he be removed. I suggest that Mr Wallace has resented that in a big way.

Hon GREG SMITH: Something that struck me when Mr Wallace was in - I am probably asking for an opinion - was that he seemed to pursue some trivial matters with extreme gusto, and other matters which seemed more serious were not pursued. What sort of cases did he pursue? Was it the trivial things that upset people, or just his manner?

Mr Goddard: It was just his manner. Mr Wallace has one very good ingredient for an investigator-inspector: He is extremely tenacious. The other problem he has is his attitude.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you say that it goes beyond being a dogged investigator; that is, it is something else in terms of his investigation technique?

Mr Goddard: It was his technique, which is a good word, Mr Chairman. As you know, I face these allegations he has made. He has not specified the allegations. He has gone back to what he called the "Chesson era". Syd Chesson was my deputy member on the board between 1989 and 1993. We are elected for four-year terms on the board. I have been through the board's records, since 28 September when I fell out of my office chair when reading *The West Australian* and the allegations made against me, and read that I was not available for comment that day.

The CHAIRMAN: That was not said by the committee.

Mr Goddard: I could not pick the case to which he referred. I suggest that in the interests of natural justice, I must clarify this matter very clearly for the sake of my character and reputation in this city.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: In the interests of natural justice, you have made some serious allegations about Mr Wallace. How do you support the proposition? Do you say he physically shirt fronted people, which is the expression you used? Will you be able to support the claim that he would shirt front people and physically knock over filing cabinets in offices?

Mr Goddard: If they continued to give him what he considered to be a hard time -

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Did you observe that yourself?

Mr Goddard: No. Luckily, my office has never been investigated.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: It was just people telling you, was it?

Mr Goddard: They were agents ringing me.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Did they ever go to the police to say that they had been physically assaulted?

Mr Goddard: Shirt fronting someone is not physical assault, is it? I have never thought of it that way. Mr Ruxton has never been arrested for assaulting anyone.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: I am sure people commit crimes and do not get arrested for them.

Mr Goddard: I have never heard of that happening.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: You came here today to defend your reputation against an allegation made by Mr Wallace. You have made some serious allegations about Mr Wallace. How do you support them? I am sure you understand that it cuts both ways.

Mr Goddard: Sure. I want it to cut in the way he made allegations about me. I would like him to specifically identify the case.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: I understand that. I have no problem understanding your evidence in that respect today, Mr Goddard. You have agreed with us that you never observed this action, but you are prepared to tell the committee that this is the man's form and the way he behaved.

Mr Goddard: If it comes to the point, sir, I will get the specific agent who specifically rang me that specific day about an investigation conducted in his offices. I will get him in here, if I may.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Was that only one person?

Mr Goddard: It was one agent.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Has anyone else said to you that he just shirt fronted him and knocked over his filing cabinet?

Mr Goddard: One agent sticks in my mind; he used to be employed by MI5 in England, and happens to know something about investigations -

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: I am not concerned about the man's employment history. You had one. Any others? You said a moment ago that it was his way; it was what he used to do. How many others?

Mr Goddard: I will get some records researched.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Can you tell me today?

Mr Goddard: I cannot tell you today.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: You have made an allegation and when I ask how you to support it, you say you remember one bloke ringing you.

Mr Goddard: Correct.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: We can then put your evidence in context.

Mr Goddard: Other agents apparently have written to the board about it.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Have you any direct knowledge of that?

Mr Goddard: I never saw the correspondence; it never got to the board level. We hear it from the public servants who administer the board.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Your evidence is that one person rang you.

Mr Goddard: Okay.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Thank you.

Hon GREG SMITH: Do you know Mr Gough and Mr Avery?

Mr Goddard: They do not ring a bell in my mind.

The CHAIRMAN: I take your point about asking Mr Wallace to come in and provide further explanation. When he was before the committee we asked him who the inquiry was about, and he indicated that it was Mr Syd Chesson. Are you aware of any inquiries by the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board into Mr Chesson?

Mr Goddard: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Was there more than one?

Mr Goddard: Yes. It was Mr Chesson's company, not necessarily Mr Chesson personally.

The CHAIRMAN: Have there been any investigations into Mr Chesson personally?

Mr Goddard: There was a huge one in 1999, but that was before the period Mr Wallace was referring to.

The CHAIRMAN: He was not an investigator in 1999. Were there any inquiries into Mr Chesson when Mr Wallace was an investigator?

Mr Goddard: I want Mr Wallace to clarify that to us.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that. Are you aware of any inquiries into Mr Chesson when Mr Wallace was an investigator at the ministry dealing with real estate matters?

Mr Goddard: I am aware of an inquiry, known as case No 5236/86, about a representative of Mr Chesson's.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you speak to any of the investigators at the ministry about that inquiry?

Mr Goddard: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you never spoken to any investigators at the Ministry of Fair Trading about an inquiry into Mr Chesson or companies related to him?

Mr Goddard: As I explained previously, the investigators used to come before the board and they would talk to the full board in a private conversation about what was going on.

The CHAIRMAN: That was outside the board meeting?

Mr Goddard: They subsequently became regarded as a persona non grata; some lawyers at the Ministry of Fair Trading had some disquiet about it.

The CHAIRMAN: Other than at board meetings in front of all board members, did you at any time speak to Ministry of Fair Trading investigators?

Mr Goddard: I spoke to Mr Wallace from time to time at various functions at which we would run across each other. Mr Wallace was invited to the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia functions when he was an investigator. I was a councillor of the institute and we would see and talk to each other.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you talk about ongoing investigations? I am interested in comparing the evidence the committee has heard about the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board and the rules under which it operated. That is obviously of relevance to you in comparing the way it operated. Did you speak to Mr Wallace about investigations?

Mr Goddard: Mr Wallace and I talked lightly and informally from time to time.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that about inquiries he was conducting?

Mr Goddard: About things real estate.

The CHAIRMAN: Did that include inquiries he was conducting at that time?

Mr Goddard: I never totally knew all the things he was doing.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not asking whether he gave a full outline. Did you discuss issues you believed he was inquiring into?

Mr Goddard: Not that I specifically knew he was inquiring into, but he may have been inquiring into them without my knowing. That is the problem I confronted.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you not aware of speaking to him about an inquiry he was conducting?

Mr Goddard: I must be careful in answering this question; it is the third time you have asked me.

The CHAIRMAN: It is because I am not sure of the answer yet!

Mr Goddard: I am not sure where you are going. The board would speak to Mr Wallace. Sometimes it was on a monthly basis -

The CHAIRMAN: Was that the entire board?

Mr Goddard: He would come in and give his report on where he was going and what was happening out there. Sometimes, as the industry member, I would ask him questions. "How are you going with this case", as it had been previously discussed. It could be classified by him as me discussing things with him.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that in a board meeting? The minutes would not be that accurate about board meetings.

Mr Goddard: They try to be.

The CHAIRMAN: I have not seen the records of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board. Was this discussion in front of all other board members?

Mr Goddard: Let me put it this way: I would never specifically go into Mr Wallace's office and specifically ask him about a case.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not asking whether it was in an office. I refer to a social function or the like. Would you go to Mr Wallace and say "How is the inquiry into Mr X or Mr Y progressing?"

Mr Goddard: Yes, it could have happened.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not disputing your request that we recall Mr Wallace to clarify the allegation that he is making, but it is possible that you may have asked him about how an inquiry into Mr Chesson, or one of his companies or representatives, was going.

Mr Goddard: No, not Mr Chesson's companies. I never did that - maybe about other organisations and companies.

The CHAIRMAN: Why are you so specific about Mr Chesson's companies?

Mr Goddard: Because, as I said, with Mr Chesson, a deputy is being specifically picked out, and I would know whether I had spoken to Mr Wallace about my deputy, as opposed to the 2 998 other agents in Western Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: However, from time to time, at social functions or the like, you asked him how different inquiries were progressing.

Mr Goddard: In a light manner, yes. I never took notes. It was never on a formal basis in his office.

The CHAIRMAN: How forthcoming was he with answers to those queries?

Mr Goddard: I am sure that Mr Wallace would always be available with a comment. I have never known him to say, "No comment."

The CHAIRMAN: He would never say, "It's inappropriate for me to talk to you about that matter. It is an inquiry I am conducting"?

Mr Goddard: No, he has never done that.

The CHAIRMAN: You also mentioned earlier that when other real estate agents were subject to inquiry, they would often contact you and say, "I am under investigation."

Mr Goddard: "And this tenacious little fellow Wallace has been here. What should I do?" Most of the time I said to the agents, "Tell the truth. That would be helpful as a first-base step."

The CHAIRMAN: However, when you spoke to agents, in the main was it because they were complaining to you about Mr Wallace, or would agents ring you for other reasons?

Mr Goddard: A lot of other inspectors were going around doing the same thing he was doing. I never seemed to get any calls about the other inspectors' activities in real estate agents' offices; it always seemed to be about Mr Wallace's activities. He had the ability to get up people's noses. Maybe that was because they did not do what he wanted them to do instantaneously, or maybe it was because Mr Wallace always held the belief that all real estate agents whom he was involved in investigating were guilty.

The CHAIRMAN: Because the committee's terms of reference relate to the finance brokers, I am more interested in trying to work out how the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board operated so that the committee can compare that with how the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board operated.

Mr Goddard: We shared the same investigators for some years.

The CHAIRMAN: Allegations have been put to us that a member of the public went to a member of the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board and said, "Look, I've got these allegations against this finance broker." If someone did that to you, as a member of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board, what action would you take?

Mr Goddard: It happened to me.

The CHAIRMAN: What did you do?

Mr Goddard: Because I have been trained, I must refer those people - incidentally, a large number are referred on to me - to the manager of the real estate unit, because I say to those people, "If you want to continue to drive me mad and take up two and a half hours of my time explaining your grievances, you must understand one thing: I can't sit on that hearing; I must stand down. Now, you must make that decision, mister member of the public, as to which way you want this to go." Personally, I prefer not to get involved, because it is hugely time wasting. I spend enough of my time on the Real Estate Board. In fact, it has cost me thousands of dollars in the 11 years I have been on the board. I prefer to direct those people to the registrar or to the manager of the unit. They talk to them, and those men and those people sort out whether it is a justifiable complaint. Sometimes these complaints are quite vindictive. They have no substance, of course, and they do not go anywhere. Those people go along to the Gunning inquiry and complain. They go along to the Gunning inquiry and complain about me too because they have lost the case. They have done that.

The CHAIRMAN: As I said, unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how one looks at it, the committee is not looking into real estate matters specifically.

Mr Goddard: This is what blew me out of the water with his evidence here, because I thought, if he was going to say these things about me, he would have said them at the Gunning inquiry, because it was specifically looking into the board.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not able to answer why Mr Wallace did or did not do anything.

Mr Goddard: No. I do not think anyone could.

The CHAIRMAN: If someone rang you, you would advise them that if they wanted to tell you more about the matter, you could not carry it any further.

Mr Goddard: Some people would say, "I don't give a damn about the fact that you have to stand down. I want you, as the industry member, to get involved", and I would have to wear it.

The CHAIRMAN: Then you would get involved.

Mr Goddard: Yes, I would get involved. I would write letters to the board.

The CHAIRMAN: Then you would have to withdraw from the hearing, if that occurred.

Mr Goddard: Yes, my word. That is right. This happens from time to time. I have been involved in one matter that has gone on for six years. It is still unresolved.

The CHAIRMAN: However, if a serious allegation was before you and you referred it to the ministry, would you then follow up to make sure that it came before the board, or once you have referred it to the ministry, is that the end of it?

Mr Goddard: No, it depends how persistent the complainant is. For example, this afternoon someone rang me about a complaint, and I said, "Ring Mr Rossi, the registrar, and speak to him about it. Here is his direct line number. Don't speak to me about it." I get \$509 a fortnight to sit on that board. Sometimes I am at that board three days a week.

The CHAIRMAN: In a general sense, do you have any comments about the way the ministry operates between its boards? Are there any obvious problems that you can see with the Ministry of Fair Trading?

Mr Goddard: I do not know which way Judge Gunning will go, of course, because I am not privy to that, but, in a general sense, if it were up to me, the boards would be divested. There are eight of them. I sat in the back of this room the other Friday afternoon when the committee had the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Fair Trading, the unshaven registrar and the deputy registrar of the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board here. I was here for two hours, and I walked out of here shaking my head. I did not know whether I was Arthur or Martha, and I do not know how you blokes got on at the end of the day. They could not tell you the basis of the employment. The registrar said that he has no knowledge because he has only been there since 1999, and he obviously did not want to know about anything further back than 1999. It is very lacklustre.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the experience that you have also had as a Real Estate Board member.

Mr Goddard: The only thing that saved the Real Estate Board was that in 1996 we rearranged the funding, and the board became self-funded. Up until 1996, I and every other estate agent in Western Australia had to remit 25 per cent of the balance of our trust account to the board, and that was the money that used to operate the board. That was not a very satisfactory state of affairs for small agencies like mine. Obviously, I am a small agent, because I spend so much time at the Real Estate Institute of WA or at the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board that I do not have time to build up a huge organisation. Therefore, I had to take money - trust funds - out of, say, two or three clients' ledgers to remit my 25 per cent to the board. Then I had to make an application to get it back. It could take three and a half months to get it back. It was not a very satisfactory arrangement at all. Therefore, that all got abolished. Then the board became very

affluent as a result of the new funding arrangement. That is what saved the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board. It is fairly powerful in its own right now, because it has the money. Does the committee know that the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board pays the Ministry of Fair Trading four and a half million dollars a year to look after it? That strikes me as a huge sum of money - four and a half million dollars a year.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: What does the board get for that? How many investigators does it get?

Mr Goddard: The investigators fluctuate.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: Is there an average? Does the board get a full-time equivalent or two?

Mr Goddard: I think it gets about two or three, but, as I said, they seem to come and go. Our biggest bottleneck is the lawyers - the legal side of it. We have a lot of cases coming up, but we cannot get them through the legal department, because people in the legal department come and go at a furious rate too.

Hon G.T. GIFFARD: About four and a half million dollars covers all those things.

Mr Goddard: Yes.

Hon GREG SMITH: What is the most common sort of complaint that comes into the Real Estate Board?

Mr Goddard: We have huge qualified audits on trust accounts at some times of the year. As the committee knows, the audits must be in by 31 March each year. This year, we jumped on the audit of the trust account problems, and I think 61 agents were prosecuted for audit situations. Misrepresentation is fairly high on the list.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to check something. Is it correct that the Smith inquiry was in 1996, but the changes occurred in 1997?

Mr Goddard: You could be right, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Since that time, you have been fairly satisfied with the investigations.

Mr Goddard: Things have picked up enormously.

The CHAIRMAN: However, prior to that time -

Mr Goddard: The other point that should be made is that we got a new chairman, Mr David Dawes, and he made a tremendous difference. He is a barrister.

The CHAIRMAN: When was that?

Mr Goddard: That must have been about the bottom end of 1997. Mr Dawes made a tremendous difference, because he is fearless. He will tackle anybody.

The CHAIRMAN: I am more interested in the time prior to that when the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board was sharing resources with the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board.

Mr Goddard: And the Settlement Agents Supervisory Board and the Land Valuers Licensing Board.

The CHAIRMAN: I think there were four boards, were there not?

Mr Goddard: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: From your recollection as a member of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board, were there problems with getting matters investigated prior to that separation, when the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board got its own funding and was set up as a separate body?

Mr Goddard: I do not know that I can talk about or comment on that. I think that the paid staff of the ministry should comment on that.

The CHAIRMAN: From your perspective as a board member, I am asking whether you were satisfied that the board was getting adequate service from the Ministry of Fair Trading in investigations?

Mr Goddard: Let us put it this way, Mr Chairman: I have learnt in the 11 years that I have been involved on the board that the Public Service is a very powerful animal. In fact, the Public Service, to me, is about four courses of brickwork solid - very difficult - and I am well aware that a former registrar of the board said to me one day, "Listen, Bill, you can jump up and down over the table, you can thump the board table and you can have a heart attack and die, as far as I'm concerned, but the Public Service will stay behind and will still be here long after you've gone, and it will carry on as normal." It was difficult to get past that attitude at times. Those people operated the way they wanted to operate, and if one were not very careful, one would start to fall for the situation where they give many, many good reasons that nothing can happen.

Hon GREG SMITH: It is a bureaucrat's speciality.

Mr Goddard: They are very good at it.

The CHAIRMAN: I still do not know that I have an answer to my question. Maybe, if I read between the lines, you are saying that you are worried about saying that in an open hearing.

Mr Goddard: Yes, that is a fair comment. I think I have said too much today.

The CHAIRMAN: You think you would potentially suffer as a result. I draw your attention to item 14 on the form that you signed, which says that if you feel you have been threatened or intimidated as a result of the evidence you have given to this committee, you should immediately inform the committee or one of its staff. Maybe the committee will go into a private hearing at the end of this session and I will ask you that question again. I am keen to find out how the Real Estate Board operated, because it was sharing resources, and we have heard a large amount of evidence about how the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board felt.

Mr Goddard: We never had anything to do with any of those other boards.

The CHAIRMAN: No, but you were obviously sharing the resources, so I am trying to ascertain whether you were also experiencing the same problems.

Mr Goddard: We shared the registrar too.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you know whether the Real Estate Board ever raised concerns with the ministry or the minister about the problems with the resourcing of the unit within the Ministry of Fair Trading that serviced the four boards?

Mr Goddard: We used to meet at night at the Australian Institute of Management at Floreat Park. We used to meet there on Thursday nights, and we did that for some weeks with the Ministry of Fair Trading's senior officers as well. We used to talk about all these things and how we could become more effective and better in what we were doing. That was in the Jenny Bunbury era, when Jenny Bunbury was the director of the real estate unit. I felt that those meetings at the Australian Institute of Management were constructive, because we got and they got a better understanding of the sorts of things we really needed to tackle. I felt that was a very productive time.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that only the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board members?

Mr Goddard: Yes. The real estate board met every week for years; the other boards met monthly. It was a different kettle of fish.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of the board ever raising concerns with any Minister for Fair Trading or the ministry?

Mr Goddard: Mrs Henderson was the only minister who came to our meetings to talk to us about our problems. It was refreshing.

The CHAIRMAN: Have any ministers since Mrs Henderson done that?

Mr Goddard: Not that I can recall.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of any concerns raised by the board about the real estate arena that were not responded to satisfactorily?

Mr Goddard: From time to time we would leap up and down.

The CHAIRMAN: To whom?

Mr Goddard: To the manager of the real estate unit. If that achieved nothing, we would write to the minister. Our new chairman has eyeball-to-eyeball meetings with the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Has he done that since 1997 - when he became chairman - if he believes he does not have the appropriate resources?

Mr Goddard: He meets Mr Shave regularly.

The CHAIRMAN: Did previous chairmen do that?

Mr Goddard: The previous chairman was a nice, low-key lawyer. He was a much different kettle of fish; he was more timid. He went up the hill to see a minister once or twice during his term.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that to raise the board's concerns about resources?

Mr Goddard: Yes, but he would do it much differently; he would be extremely polite and he could be put off by 150 reasons that it could not happen.

The CHAIRMAN: Was the board ever advised about why the Roberts-Smith inquiry related only to the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board and the Settlement Agents Supervisory Board and not all four boards?

Mr Goddard: No. Mr Roberts-Smith met with us. He was also a high-ranking public servant in his day.

The CHAIRMAN: He is a former Electoral Commissioner.

Mr Goddard: He told me he was getting a lot of government work. He was charging only \$60 an hour for his consultancy work, and the Government was comfortable with that. He spoke to us and prepared a huge report. That goes back three or four years. I do not know why the inquiry did not extend to other boards. Perhaps they could not afford to pay the fee.

The CHAIRMAN: Did he definitely ask about the problems facing the board?

Mr Goddard: Yes. He interviewed many staff.

The CHAIRMAN: Did the board raise problems about getting matters finalised?

Mr Goddard: Sometimes these inquiries come to a head three years after the event. I am sure we raised those issues with Mr Roberts-Smith. We had some lengthy discussions with him.

The CHAIRMAN: I think most members of Parliament have come across Mr Roberts-Smith in his former life as head of the Electoral Commission.

Mr Goddard: I thought he was with the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you at any time spoken to Mr Wallace or any other investigator in the Ministry of Fair Trading about an inquiry into Mr Chesson, his companies or anyone associated with his companies?

Mr Goddard: No, I have not.

The CHAIRMAN: You are very clear about that.

Mr Goddard: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for appearing before the committee. I appreciate the comments you have made.

Committee adjourned at 4.20 pm