



# **PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

## **INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Mr John Quigley MLA**

**(Member for Innaloo)**

**Address-in-Reply Debate**

**Legislative Assembly, Thursday 3 May 2001**

*Reprinted from Hansard*

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(Member for Innaloo)

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## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

### *Motion*

**MR QUIGLEY** (Innaloo) [9.13 am]: I shall not forget that call, Mr Speaker. I can still remember my first call to the Bar on 23 December 1975 given by His Worship Mr McGuigan, SM whom you, Sir, will remember. I had been a lawyer for an hour at that time and it was a proud moment then. I knew you then, Sir, and I have known you for more than a quarter of a century. I have known you in your previous occupation as counter clerk, bench clerk and clerk of courts. Your reputation in my profession was that of quiet practicality, always a gentleman and always fair. You, Sir, were one of those bench clerks whom one could approach to sort out a problem in the courts in a practical way, knowing that one would not be shown favour nor shown the door. The qualities that you had and displayed at that time struck me when I came to this place as preparing you well and giving you good attributes to be the Speaker of this hallowed Chamber. I am sure that had there been an open ballot, you would have won it hands down. You are head and shoulders above any member of this House to preside over this Chamber. As a judge brings a personality to a trial, I am sure you will bring to this Chamber your personality and stamp to this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, I have a confession to make. As I have moved around this Parliament for the past several days, people have said that they want to hear me speak and have asked me what I am going to say. The confession is that I do not know exactly because I did not write it out as it kept on changing as I tried to appreciate what was happening in the people's House. However, having acknowledged and thanked you, Mr Speaker, I want to thank the people of Innaloo whom I met during the doorknocking campaign that went for a year.

I took off nearly a year from legal practice, although I worked on some cases in the past year, and doorknocked the area. It was a marvellous experience and a lot that you, Mr Speaker, have already enjoyed. The Innaloo district stretches from Trigg in the north to Brighton Beach in the south and out to Main Street in the east, covering the suburbs of Trigg, Scarborough, Innaloo, Doubleview, Woodlands, Gwelup, Stirling, Balcatta, Osborne Park and part of Karrinyup. I have lived in Trigg for some 26 years. I found the place when I was driving a beer truck while studying at university. I was sent with a load of beer to the Castle Hotel, North Beach. When I got out

there I knew I would always live within a decent cricket ball's throw of Trigg Point, and I have spent the past 26 years in the same house. I therefore feel part of the community there and I am enormously honoured that the people of Innaloo have chosen me so decisively to be their advocate in this Chamber. I note that I shall not get a big head because election does not mean that I am the best or the most community-minded person in Innaloo. They selected me as their advocate in this hallowed Chamber because they have been repressed by eight years of conservative government. The Innaloo district in particular has been stripped bare and needs some correction in the life of this Parliament. I will come to that matter in a moment but I want to give some other thanks at the outset of my speech.

Having thanked the people of Innaloo, I pledge my loyalty to them at all times. I also thank those who have helped me during the campaign - Mr Alistair Jones, a brilliant campaigner and a true believer; Mr Damien Parry, a young man in the party who also worked on the campaign; and Hon Graham Giffard. Their measure of commitment blew me away. I have been in the Labor Party for only 24 months but in the last week of the campaign, such was their level of commitment that we issued three direct mails to the entire electorate. Any member who has participated in a direct mail knows the work involved. I would return home at 11.00 pm to get ready for doorknocking the next day and when I went to get my daily paper in the morning, they would be either working or sleeping under their desks in the campaign office. They did not stop for seven days and I applaud and congratulate them for their efforts on behalf of the people of Innaloo.

I shall tell the House something about me and my family. I have lived in Trigg for 26 years. I do not know how far back my history goes in Western Australia, but I know that four generations of my family have attended Aquinas College. My father is in the Speaker's Gallery today. He is 86 years of age and I am very proud of him. He fought in the war with the 2/2nd Anti-tank Battalion which comprised part of the 8th Division that went to the Pacific war after it came home from the Middle East. After his discharge from the Army, he started a small business as a clothing indent agent. He still works in that occupation at the age of 86. He has imbued me with an incredible work ethic. If I could achieve half of what he has achieved, I would be somewhat satisfied. He has a happy disposition and treats all people equally. I am very proud of him. I was pleasantly struck on the opening day of Parliament when sitting in the dining room with him before the ceremonies began. I explained to my father that the Governor would be welcomed by Mr Colbung and Aboriginal performers. He said that that was more appropriate than having the police pipe band and the mounted police. That was a great comment from an octogenarian who was raised in a different culture in the 1950s.

I acknowledge the presence in the House of two of my three children and my former wife, Mary-Ellen. Mary-Ellen and I have had a remarkable relationship since we married in 1983. I spent about five years working on royal commissions and took my eye off the ball, so I accept responsibility for the failure of my marriage. Mary-Ellen and the children live in the house behind mine and my father lives in a house behind them. We are running a kibbutz in Trigg! The hole in the fence that allows easy and loving access for the kids is designed to allow a child access, not an adult. However, Mary-Ellen and I communicate on a daily basis and I thank her for her helpful and friendly advice during the campaign. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing my father to occupy a seat in the Speaker's gallery with my former wife and two children in deference to the condition of his legs and his inability to climb the stairs.

I also thank the Police Union of Western Australia, of which I am an honorary life member. I want to give my friends on the other side a tip because I heard that a book is being run on how long it will take Quigley to move to the other side of the House and the odds of that happening. I can remember 1975 when I was the articled clerk to Ivan Gunning and he was the Police Union

barrister. He was elevated to the District Court bench and Quigley was introduced to the Police Union. I was a bit different then - I still had my hair, or some of it. The book being run then related to how long it would take the coppers to unload Quigley. However, 26 years later, I am proud to say that the bond is as tight as it ever was - I am at one with the coppers. I thank them for their support during the campaign and my preselection. On behalf of the community of Western Australia, I thank them for the job they do for the State.

I am a unionist - a life member of the Western Australian Police Union. I am indebted to my friend Mr Mike Dean and his council for their encouragement and assistance. I am also indebted to the police action committee - a committee of police officers that took over the funding of my campaign. The Police Union could not take on that role because it is a non-political organisation. I thank all those officers - serving and retired - who ran the functions and who helped man the booths.

I heard someone say yesterday that the caravan moves on and the wheel turns. I was surprised that these police officers manned the polling booths for me. I met some of them during my time as a counsel on the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters when they conducted the associated police investigations. They had been life-long supporters of the Liberal Party, but they joined the Labor Party because they experienced the treachery and betrayal of the Court Government. They arrived at the polling booths at 6.30 am on election day to get the best positions. I thank them for their support of the Australian Labor Party and their public declarations that they will never support any other party.

I have thanked those who have helped me, but, if I have omitted some, I ask them to take my thanks as read.

I have no written speech before me, so I have not had a chance to censor it - nor did anyone in my party. Some have said that I am a loose cannon. That may well be, but if I am a loose cannon rolling around on the foredeck, I can assure the House that my blast will always be aimed at members opposite. I might roll around a bit and hit the member for Murdoch or the member for Merredin - although I do not want to hit him because he is a good bloke and the father of the House. Given that I have a reputation as a loose cannon, I invite interjections. I would not like to think that something would fall from my lips that was so offensive or provocative to my friends opposite that they did not want to have a go at me. It will not be pleasant. I saw the Leader of the Opposition attack the Premier with a wet lettuce leaf the other day. Such an attack on me would be a bit grim.

One of the reasons for my success in the electorate of Innaloo and the Liberal Party's rejection is the Court Government's duplicity. Members of that Government wrote to the community before shutting down Scarborough Senior High School and made certain promises.

Someone asked me how I will go sitting on the backbench and not having a say. At my preselection, which you attended, Mr Speaker, I promised that I would come into this place offering my support to Dr Gallop.

I have a letter written by Hon Colin Barnett as Minister for Education dated 22 October 1998 that states -

the land for community use -

The land which they intended to save for our community and which made me very envious -

- will include that land containing the hall/gymnasium and swimming pool; . . .

the Education Department will complete any necessary maintenance work to the pool and hall/gymnasium before any handover;

That letter was signed “Colin J. Barnett, Minister of Education”. Well he might have made that promise, because it was the community’s effort with lamington drives, chook raffles and so on that enabled their construction in the first place. Having made that promise, what did the former minister arrange to have done at the end of the 1999 school year?

Several members interjected.

Mr QUIGLEY: I welcome the Leader of the Opposition to the House.

The first facilities bulldozed were the gymnasium and the swimming pool that the community had helped to build. I do not want to forget that, so I have laminated the letter. I will keep it here in my cute little drawer. When I laminated it, I put a bit of yellow paper on the back. Mr Speaker, if you see me discreetly holding this piece of paper - exhibit A - you will know it is evidence of the Leader of the Opposition’s deception.

Mr Barnett: Is this a maiden speech?

Mr QUIGLEY: This is a maiden speech. I am a backbencher. I will only occasionally get a say on behalf of the people of Innaloo, and I will not miss the Leader of the Opposition once. Before I rose to my feet, I indicated that if the Leader of the Opposition wants to interject and hit me with his wet lettuce leaf, he is free to do so.

The Labor Party promised the people of Innaloo more. It could not promise them 100 per cent of the high school, because the previous Government had bulldozed it. The Labor Party promised the people of Innaloo two things: First, consultation; and, secondly, a better deal than they would get from the Liberal Party. They said I was a loose cannon. I want to relate to the House something I was told by the Premier in the party room - the Caucus. I was cautioned never to break caucus confidentiality. I am chancing my arm on this occasion, because I was struck by the question from the Leader of the Opposition on the first day of Parliament. He said -

I take this opportunity first to congratulate the member for Victoria Park on his election success and on becoming Premier of this State. I equally congratulate all members on their election to this Chamber, . . .

He then went on to ask whether the Premier intends to maintain the net operating surplus.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr BARNETT: I most reluctantly take a point of order when a member is making a maiden speech. It is a convention of this Parliament that members making their maiden speech will be listened to in quietness and with respect. It is also a convention of this Parliament that maiden speeches will not be contentious or of a highly political nature. My point of order is whether the member is quoting from an uncorrected *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: What the Leader of the Opposition says about tradition is true. Maiden speeches are generally not political. However, it is my understanding that when a member refuses the protection of the Chair, as the member for Innaloo has done in relation to interjections, the side of the House that has remained silent throughout the speech is entitled to interject.

Mr BARNETT: The point of order is whether the member is quoting from an uncorrected *Hansard*. That is what I ask you to rule on, Mr Speaker.

Mr QUIGLEY: I was refreshing my memory of it.

The SPEAKER: Members are not permitted to quote from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*. The member for Innaloo should not quote from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*.

Mr QUIGLEY: It was the member's words and he knew I was paraphrasing those words. He knew that by paraphrasing those words, I was not breaking any rule of this House, and that is why I paraphrased them. He asked the Premier whether he intended to keep -

The SPEAKER: A new member is not permitted to canvass my ruling. Standing Orders do not refer to members' quoting from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*.

*Debate Resumed*

Mr QUIGLEY: The Premier told us in the gathered assembly called Caucus, as new members waited to learn how we could take our social dividend out to the electorate, that he had been to see the Under Treasurer. The Under Treasurer told him what the former Leader of the National Party had told Western Australia 12 months ago; that is, unless the spending in this State was reined in, we stood to lose our AAA credit rating. He might have thought that the new backbenchers thought this was some political ploy by the Executive. The Treasurer took us to Treasury where we were briefed by the Under Treasurer. We were given a set of bar graphs rather than numbers, for which I am grateful because bar graphs are easier for me to read. The pre-election budget bottom line was deficit, deficit, deficit, with a projected surplus for this year, the election year. A smaller surplus is projected for next year and then deficit, deficit. I heard the Leader of the Opposition on the ABC news last night rabbiting on about how we were on course for a \$98 million surplus. He reminds me of the bus driver who, when the passengers ran up from the back of the bus and said, "Hey, boss, there is a hairy bit of road ahead and a river", replied "We are on course; we are on the road." He did not tell the passengers that a crash was imminent. If he had let the passengers at the back of the bus - the people of Western Australia - know, they would have disembarked at that point. The under treasurer then went on to show us the expenditure and revenue bar graph, which is finely balanced - there are only a couple of hundred million dollars in it.

As the bus is hurtling down the road, the bus driver knows what is ahead. He is hoping that the resource exports will push them out of trouble before the next election. Are there any risks involved in this strategy? It is a hurtling ride, a scary ride. Then we learn that one of the back tyres is bald and about to blow out, because there are major assumptions and risks. The major risk the Opposition was taking was that the whole deficit was predicated on a petrol price of \$US23 a barrel. Mr Sharon is bombing parts of the Gaza Strip and the Middle East is ready to explode; yet the bus driver is saying, "The tyre will hold. Don't worry about it; go back to your seats." If we had kept going down this path, Western Australia would have been well and truly in the drink. I have not altered these accounts, other than added a red back page. This means the Opposition is totally out of control. I will happily keep my peace and not be named by you, Mr Speaker, for interjections. However, exhibit A means the Leader of the Opposition is about to deceive the lot of us and exhibit B means the Opposition is out of control and everyone should jump ship. I will put these two documents in my cute little drawer and leave them there for the life of this Parliament. I tell my good friend the member for Albany and my other colleagues on this bench that they are welcome to it any time I am not in the Chamber, because I trust them.

The Opposition came up with the slimy "Don't risk Labor" campaign during the election. That is all it had to say. The member for Albany is not a risk. He is an Olympian, Aussie family man from Albany who flogged the former member for Albany. He is welcome to the red and yellow cards whenever he wants.

I was thinking last night about this Chamber and its similarity to the courtroom. Of course, it is a sepulchre - a cauldron. The similarity is that they are both public rooms. In both the courtroom

and this room, people become heroic and people become tragic and people get their hearts and ambitions broken in two; it is all in public. I will be pleased to be here on the back bench to watch it all. I was going to ask you, Mr Speaker, whether it was okay to hold up these red and yellow cards or whether I would be named for it and be thrown out. However, I should not ask authority for an advisory ruling.

If the High Court will not give an advisory ruling, why should the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly? It is more the pity that the High Court does not give advisory rulings, in my humble opinion, for had the High Court been in the position to give advisory rulings, it could have advised the Leader of the Opposition and the former Premier that the land rights legislation that they cranked up a few years ago at enormous cost to Western Australia was a nincompoop of an idea and they should not have wasted the Chamber's time with arguing it through. That is what the High Court could have done when the former Government tried to subvert the Mabo and Wik rulings.

I am proud to be on the back bench of the Gallop Labor Government - very proud. I joined the Labor Party because it was the democratic party in Western Australia; it was the party that gave the mums and dads a say. I have been in the party for only a little over two years. As I was explaining to the Father of the House yesterday, one must have a reason for being catapulted into politics and then one embraces the wider reasons. My reason was the rhetoric of the Court Government on law and order and how it created the Anti-Corruption Commission in the deficient manner in which it did. It saw the best crime fighters in Western Australia waylaid for years, as criminals from organised crime went into a closed room to tell their lies in secret to get the best of the best suspended. I could not stand by and watch that happen any more.

I had been in Adelaide appearing at a bombing inquest for eight months for Jane Bowen, whose husband's life was taken by organised crime in South Australia. Being in South Australia for eight months and working with its organised crime squad gave me an insight into the pernicious nature of organised crime and how, in the arm wrestle in Western Australia, organised crime was besting the Court Government and running rings around it. That is what drove me. When I saw the reforms that Dr Gallop was implementing in the Australian Labor Party, I thought that they were for me.

Dr Gallop went to the state conference, stood up before the unions and all the people and said that the public of Western Australia want a direct input into preselection. The member for Hillarys was gobsmacked when I told him the other day that all the Labor Party members living in Innaloo get to vote directly on preselection. He did not believe me.

Mr Graham: When I give my speech, I will give a different view.

Mr QUIGLEY: I shall be here. I welcome the comment and interjection of the member for Pilbara. I was a bit disturbed, and somewhat concerned when I saw him sitting so far over on the third row opposite on day one, but I am more encouraged that he has come to this side.

The mums and dads of Innaloo had that direct input. Would the mums and dads of Nedlands - the Excalibur of the Liberal Party - love a direct vote on who should be the next leader of the Liberal Party? Whoever becomes the member for Nedlands will be carrying Excalibur - the Liberal Party hope. He will have drawn Excalibur from those turbid waters that flow through Menzies House. At the moment the Leader of the Opposition is trying to pull the sword from the waters. He is not the vested one; the mandarins from Murray Street will determine who ultimately sits in the seat occupied by the Leader of the Opposition.

I thank the people of Innaloo. When I leave this Chamber - when it is exit stage left - I shall come back to this part of my speech and say that during my time in this Chamber from day one I vigorously prosecuted the case of the people of Innaloo who deserve a so much better deal.

I give a particular thank you to the Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club and Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club. It is the year of the volunteer, and their members are great volunteers. Each club has carried out more than 200 rescues in the past year involving Perth's premier beaches. There was only one drowning, that of a person swimming right outside the flag area. Scarborough Surf Life Saving Club patrols three kilometres of beach from Scarborough to Swanbourne where the conditions in the water are often extremely difficult. Its members did well at the national titles, with even young Tom Webber from the Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club taking out the under-16 surf race bronze medal. Their participation in three metre seas at Kurrawa the weekend before last, demonstrated the type of people who are in that club, and what sort of service they are extending to the people of Innaloo, the visitors to Western Australia and the wider public.

[Applause.]

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