

NORTHBRIDGE — ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

844. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Police:

The Premier and the Minister for Police recently announced a raft of legislative changes to address antisocial behaviour and to assist police in managing antisocial behaviour in entertainment precincts, especially Northbridge. Can the minister please update the house on the intent of the legislation?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

I thank the member for the question. I have been away for a short break—a little holiday with my wife —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Good tan, minister!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes, it is not bad, is it?

I read some newspaper reports whilst I was away, and I was half expecting a question along these lines from the member for Mindarie because I thought he had taken over the shadow police portfolio; I actually thought there had been a reshuffle in the shadow cabinet! Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition has had to step in and put him in his place, and, quite rightly, allow the member for Girrawheen to be the one to ask questions and make comments about that particular area.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Is it not funny that people say to me that the member for Mindarie was very silly when he was on this side of house, and that he is even sillier on that side of the house? I have to say that I do not agree with that: I do not think he has changed at all!

Let me answer the member for Scarborough's question.

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Here is the friend of the criminal.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: This government is fully committed to law and order throughout the whole of Western Australia. Under the previous Labor government, violent crime, and crime in general, increased.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: That was not only in Northbridge, but throughout the whole of the state. It increased not only on the streets, but also on our roads. In the next day or so we will be debating the stop-and-search legislation. I am fully aware that the opposition will vote against that legislation; it does not support these tough stances against people who carry weapons in entertainment precincts such as Northbridge.

Mr P. Papalia: Why don't you stop talking about it and do something about it?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We are, my friend; we are doing it today and tomorrow. We are doing something.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Everybody is refreshed; that is great. It is nice that you are all back in this place and fired up with enthusiasm. I would like to hear the minister's response more than anything else at this moment. The minister has the call.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: My response is that this government is doing a tremendous amount in the area of law and order, as it has done since it was voted in by the people. As the Premier has said regularly —

Mr A.P. O'Gorman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Joondalup!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Do not get excited, okay!

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: You haven't opened the police station. It got bombed, and you haven't opened it again!

The SPEAKER: Member for Joondalup!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: As I said, no government has done more than the present government to toughen crime legislation to deal with criminals in WA. This government has ensured that anybody who bashes or seriously assaults a police officer will go to jail—in contrast to the wishy-washy legislation of the previous government. In the last three years of the previous government —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Just like the lout who kicked the ambo; bodily harm —

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: For goodness sake! Perhaps I should agree with the person who said that the member for Mindarie is sillier over there than he was over here!

A member interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: As is my friend the member—consistent in a lot of nonsense!

This government will continue its tough crackdown on crime and criminals. It has done that by way of the serious assaults on police officers legislation; we will be doing it with the stop-and-search powers; we will be doing it with the weapons bill, which will also be debated this week; and we will be doing it with the cannabis reform laws. We are making good the wishy-washy legislation that the previous government put in place, which simply resulted in the amount of cannabis being used in WA to get out of control. We are dealing with that, and we will continue to. That is why the people voted for us at the last election. As the Premier said, the former government threw in the towel and public threw in the towel on it; that is why they voted for us.