

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS AND ORGANISED CRIME SYNDICATES

562. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Police:

May I start by acknowledging the smiling faces of the students from St Mary's Anglican School and Madeley Primary School who are present in the gallery this afternoon.

Following the bikie-related shooting in my electorate of Jandakot last month, my constituents are naturally concerned about the growing influence of outlaw motorcycle gangs and other organised crime syndicates in Western Australia. Will the minister inform the house of what he is doing to combat this scourge?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

I thank the member for the question and for his genuine interest in issues of law and order and the events that took place —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Name the bikie gang.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Girrawheen!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am looking forward to the next seven weeks!

It was a good, genuine question. I want to pass on some information to the house if I am allowed to. Tomorrow I will be chairing the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management comprising police ministers from states and territories all over Australia. I know that my colleague, the former minister, has attended many of those in his time. At tomorrow's meeting one very significant item will be on the agenda. It is a very important one and one that the federal Attorney-General has been in contact with me about, and that is organised outlaw bikie gangs. As the member for Jandakot has said, these criminal bikie gangs are some of the worst —

Mr J.R. Quigley: How many are there?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member should know. Has he not represented some of them?

Ms M.M. Quirk: Name a bikie gang.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am doing a Jim McGinty. When members interject on me, I will wait until the Speaker calls them to order.

Ms M.M. Quirk: We will give you a hand.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Girrawheen might give the minister a hand by listening to his answer for a little longer. I formally call her to order for the first time.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I just want to inform the house that the Attorney General and I are working on some legislation that we will be taking to cabinet. The legislation will be in two or three tranches. The first will give the Commissioner of Police the authority to be able to go to a Supreme Court judge to obtain what is known as a declaration, which means that a criminal or an organised gang can be declared as such. If the judge grants a declaration of that nature, it will give the Commissioner of Police the authority to prohibit or put prohibition orders in place to stop that organised gang member or that organised gang from associating with other known criminals or any other individual who the Commissioner of Police decides should be covered by the order. It will also cover situations in which gang members will be prohibited from going to certain public events when it is considered that they will be a danger to the public. That is one part of the legislation. There are other parts, which are very much covert operations in which an elite squad of police officers will be able to assume identities so that they are able to infiltrate the organised crime gangs. It is not just bikie gangs but any organised criminal gang because —

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is going to be broader than bikie gangs?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes, it will be broader than bikie gangs. The Attorney General and I are doing this between us; we want to ensure that our legislation is as tough if not tougher than any other legislation throughout the whole of Australia. We do not want WA to become a safe haven for organised bikie gangs, or organised criminal gangs to come to Western Australia because they think it is safer for them. At the moment New South Wales and South Australia are the only two states with legislation in place. Both states have very tough legislation, but there are unique differences. We are looking at getting the best from both of those states, and that is what he will bring to cabinet and hopefully to the Parliament later this year.

If Western Australia does not start this process now, particularly as other states are putting legislation in place, particularly New South Wales and South Australia —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Did Victoria do it?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, it is interesting that Victoria has not done it. Victoria has been a bit reluctant up to now. I hope it will. We do not want to see in WA shoot-outs and murders like those we have seen on the streets of Melbourne recently. We do not want to see the sort of thuggery and violent behaviour that occurred at Sydney airport. They are the sort of actions we have seen in two other states. We do not want to see that in WA. I am sure that every member feels the same. We are working very hard to get that legislation in place. Tomorrow at the ministerial council meeting, I feel fairly confident that my fellow ministers from all the other states and territories will come on board and make Australia a safer place.