

POLICE — CLANDESTINE DRUG LABORATORIES

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

I understand that, as a result of the Liberal–National government’s boosting of police resourcing and support services for the police, over the past 12 months the police have run an operation to close down illegal drug-manufacturing operations in Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those opposite could not care less about law and order issues, but I care about them.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you formally to order for the second time today.

Mr P.B. Watson: Unbelievable!

The SPEAKER: Sometimes believable, member for Albany. I want to be able to hear the question, members; everybody should be able to hear the question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Would the minister update the house on the outcomes and progress of police operations to close down illegal drug manufacturing in our suburbs?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

I thank the member for Scarborough for the question; I know she has a very keen interest in ensuring that these sorts of clandestine drug labs are closed down as quickly as possible. This is good news for the police, and for this government, because this week the police uncovered the one-hundredth clandestine drug laboratory this year in Western Australia. Drug manufacture, pushing and selling has a devastating effect on so many people in our society, and it is something that this government is very concerned about and will do everything it can to combat. This government is certainly far tougher —

Mr T.G. Stephens: You are a joke, minister!

The SPEAKER: Member for Pilbara, there are other ways to make your point in this place. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yesterday, in Mandurah, WA Police uncovered the one-hundredth clandestine drug laboratory this year. Detectives attended a house in Fifth Avenue, Mandurah, and detected a strong chemical smell coming from a shed at the rear of the property. They located various drug items and drug paraphernalia. A 42-year-old Mandurah man has been charged with the manufacture of a prohibited drug and other drug offences. As I have said, the number of clandestine drug laboratories detected and dismantled by WA Police has risen by 463 per cent—from 27 in 2008 to 125 in 2009.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: All under a Liberal government!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Was that not interesting? “Under a Liberal government”—absolutely, because we resource the police properly, and the police know that they have a government behind them when it comes to drug manufacture in our state.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: People are making it everywhere under a Liberal government!

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I will be brief; I know that I upset members opposite, because they do not like to hear the truth. The fact is that this government is tougher on illegal drugs than the previous government ever was. I remind members opposite again that they allowed people to grow two cannabis plants per household. I have already brought in legislation on behalf of the government to make it a crime to do that. The previous government did not want to do that; it encouraged people to grow their own, roll their own and smoke their own. We have introduced other anti-drug legislation, and tomorrow I will introduce a bill to deal with ice pipes and other drug paraphernalia, which are a scourge on our society. A member opposite referred to children being affected by drugs; this government takes that more seriously than the previous government ever did.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We will very shortly bring in legislation that will deal very seriously with those people who manufacture drugs in places where children may be present, and those people who sell or supply drugs to the children of our state. That is something that the previous government did not even contemplate. It almost encouraged these people by its lax attitude and by its decriminalisation of cannabis. We take this issue seriously. We will continue to resource our police properly, and we will back them 100 per cent in their fight against illegal drug manufacture and the sale of drugs to people in our society, particularly children.