

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2011 — HOMELESS PEOPLE

217. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Does the Premier personally endorse the arrogant comments of the Minister for Police last week during the debate on this issue?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

That is a particularly silly supplementary question. I have just answered the question. In any city, there are invariably a number of homeless people, for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes it is family breakdowns; sometimes it is mental health issues or whatever. Those people will be treated with respect and care. I meet regularly with the heads of churches through the Council of Churches of WA. They have put forward a proposal to the government for a drop-in centre in the central city area. That is something the government is looking at right now, for precisely that reason.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What have you said to the police minister? Have you told him to pull his head in?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Would I say that to him? No, I would not. The comments were regrettable. The minister is an experienced member of Parliament. Frankly, out of frustration, after two weeks of mindless debate about the CHOGM bill, I can understand how that frustration occurred. Everyone in this chamber, including me, has made comments in the heat of debate that they probably regret. I do not endorse those comments and neither does the minister. However, the relevant issue is: will homeless people in Perth be disrupted? I do not believe they will be, but if that occurs, they will be treated with respect, and accommodation will be found for them.