

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 15 August 1985

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at 3.00 p.m.

The **SPEAKER** (Mr Harman) took the Chair.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr B. L. Okely) read the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Professor Gordon Stanley Reid) summoning the third session of the Thirty-first Parliament.

SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber; and, having heard His Excellency the Governor (Professor Gordon Stanley Reid) deliver the opening Speech (see Council report preceding), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

ORANGE PEOPLE

Entry to Australia: Petition

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [3.45 p.m.]: I present a petition bearing 48 signatures in the following terms—

TO: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

WE, the undersigned citizens of Western Australia, call upon the State Government to request the Federal Government to prevent non-Australian Rajneeshis (Orange People) from migrating to or entering Australia as visitors, until investigations against them in India, United States and elsewhere are completed.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 1.)

[Questions taken.]

ACTS AMENDMENT (RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY DISAGREEMENTS) BILL

Leave to Introduce

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [4.14 p.m.]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of the House to initiate legislation, I move—

That leave be granted to introduce a Bill for "An Act to provide for the resolution of disagreements arising between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council in relation to Bills, and for incidental and other matters".

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Distribution of Copies

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman): Accompanied by honourable members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to members of both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused printed copies of the Speech to be distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIRST DAY

Motion

MR P. J. SMITH (Bunbury) [4.15 p.m.]: I move—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please your Excellency;

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

The policies of the Burke Government over the last 2½ years have seen Western Australia and Bunbury flourish.

There is no doubt in my mind that one of the major successes of the Burke Government is its decentralisation policies. I refer, of course, to

the "Bunbury 2000" concept which was formalised with the creation of the South West Development Authority in 1983. Unlike Governments of previous years which made a great deal of noise about decentralisation, the Burke Government has established the South West Development Authority as a statutory body that can work freely in conjunction with the Government to develop the south-west region with Bunbury as the regional centre.

I cannot speak too highly of the work carried out by Dr Ernest Manea, the chairman; Kevin Strapp, the vice chairman; and Sister Glenys Yeomans as the third member of the board. They, together with their active committee drawn from a wide range of community interests in the south-west, have really put Bunbury and the south-west on the map in the few short years the authority has been in existence. Immense benefit has already come to the south-west region because of their activities. I will concentrate on the activities and projects that have been, or are being, brought to fruition in the Bunbury electorate.

Those of us who live in the rural areas realise that one of the disadvantages of living outside the metropolitan area is that those with children, who must go on to a higher education, particularly tertiary education, are at a severe disadvantage. It is common knowledge that only the poor or those rich enough to load their wealth into assets, can get Government assistance in the form of the TEAS allowance. But for the majority of people, the family is required to make great sacrifices if the children are to receive a tertiary education.

The need to locate tertiary institutions in various regional centres has been recognised for many years. The establishment of the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education as one of the first tertiary institutions—certainly the first advanced education facility—outside the metropolitan area is well under way. The first stage, which will cost approximately \$2.3 million, is nearing completion and tenders have already been called for the second stage.

The State Government has kept its promise to the people of the south-west by investing more than \$6 million in establishing the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education. An active committee, chaired by Mr Malcolm McPherson and under the directorship of Dr John Collins, has been established. More than 200 students are expected in its first intake at the beginning of 1986.

Part of the problem with retaining the population in the rural areas has been the drain of jobs, particularly Government jobs, to the metropolitan area. It is puzzling that some eight per cent of the population lives in the south-west region, yet only two per cent of Government workers are located there. Before the last election, the Burke Government promised to decentralise some sections of departments or to relocate Government jobs to the Bunbury area to boost this percentage. The aim was to both boost the population and to make more public service jobs available to the people of the south-west region. The relocation of these jobs has been a major project of the South West Development Authority and, at present, it seems that up to 400 jobs will be relocated to the Bunbury area, commencing early in 1986.

The extra jobs in the area created the need for a Government building. I am pleased that for this purpose the South West Development Authority was able to arrange for the Bond Corporation to build the Austmark Bunbury tower which is currently nearing maximum height. The 11-storey building will hold many of the new departments and sections of departments. Already there is a demand for more Government office space in Bunbury. As part of the deal, a multi-storey international hotel is being built alongside it. This hotel will create another 200 jobs in the tourism and catering industries.

For more than 80 years the railway marshalling yards in the central Bunbury area have blocked the residents of Bunbury and visitors from the estuary.

For 10 years the Liberal Party promised to shift the railways so that this land could be developed for the benefit of the citizens of Bunbury. Mainly as a result of the South West Development Authority's negotiations, the railway land is now cleared, new railway facilities have been built at Picton, and a new railway station is located at Wollaston in the centre of the Bunbury suburban area. The clearing of that land has meant that, for the first time, the City of Bunbury and the Government can plan to use the Leschenault Inlet as part of the city in much the same way as the Swan River is part of the Perth central area.

I was pleased to be a member of a central urban study set up by this Government and I am proud that we have come up with an exciting concept which will soon be released and, if adopted, will make Bunbury not only the re-

gional centre of the south-west but also the true gateway of the south-west, with a beautiful and exciting central business area and surrounds.

Other initiatives taken in the Bunbury area to develop it as a regional centre and to promote the south-west have taken place in the transport sector.

Transport in the Bunbury area is in the process of being rapidly upgraded to complement Bunbury's city status. Early next year a 5½-day week, 465 service, MTT bus facility is due to commence.

Expenditure of \$2 million was announced today to enable the commencement of the Australind bypass to take the main Bunbury highway away from the city of Bunbury and to divert major traffic from the estuary.

The company Comeng WA has been awarded a \$6.7 million contract to provide a new high-speed diesel train to replace the *Australind*. The new service is expected to commence in 18 months' time and it will make two return trips a day. It will cut the time taken for this journey from 3¼ hours to two hours.

The Bunbury Airport is under review and a decision must be made on whether to upgrade the present site or to seek a better and bigger site suitable for small jet services.

In 1983 the Government made a commitment to Bunbury and the south-west. I have given a brief summary of just a few of the ways in which the Government is meeting its commitment.

I refer now to some of the wider issues affecting the State. There is concern in the community that crimes of violence seem to be on the increase. I know that the Opposition would lead us to believe that all is doom and gloom and that we should return to the days of the lash and long gaol sentences, even for minor crimes. However, it seems ironic that innocent citizens can be subjected to horrifically violent beatings, rape, or torture, and that the assailant can be convicted and given a sentence, which often is substantially reduced with good behaviour. It appears that too often the concerns of the victim are overlooked.

I do not support long gaol sentences with hard labour for relatively minor crimes, but it is time we made the punishment fit the crime. The death penalty has been abolished and, although I agree with that decision, it has created some problems with regard to those who are convicted of crimes which once were dealt with by the death penalty. There is now a need to increase the penalties, both fines and

sentences, to reflect the community's concerns about what is and is not justice. The ludicrous situation exists that a person can be heavily fined or gaoled for crimes against property, stealing, or misappropriation of money, but the crimes of depriving a person of his freedom and dignity or physically damaging a person receive relatively minor sentences. The public are occasionally dismayed at what appear to be lenient sentences handed out to criminals convicted of crimes of violence. I do not blame the judges because they have to judge from the facts presented to them and they are often restricted by the circumstances of the particular crime and the penalties allowed for.

I was very pleased to note, and I applaud, the Government's intention to introduce legislation to toughen up the procedures and definitions with regard to rape and sexual assault. In relation to assault I note that significant increases in penalties are proposed, and in particular procedures will be tightened with regard to kidnapping and other similar offences against a person.

I hope the need will be seen for more support for victims of these crimes. I know these changes will be welcomed by the majority of my constituents and by the majority of people in Western Australia.

At the same time, there is a perceived need for an increased police presence in the community. I would like to commend the Government and the Police Force for the efforts being made to upgrade the image of the police. For too long we have allowed the media, particularly the electronic media, to reinforce a feeling amongst our youth that police are to be labelled "pigs" and not to be trusted. I do not agree with this attitude which seems to prevail among our youth. We have lived in an American fantasy land of heroes being able to break the law and show up the police as being unintelligent. The images portrayed by "Mr T" and "Rambo" that one should take the law into one's own hands are not what we should be promoting.

It has been observed that a significant way to reduce crime is to have a visual police presence. This can be done only by increasing the numbers of police who can be seen by the public as being actively on duty. In the old days, the local policeman rode his bike around town or did a regular patrol on foot. People knew the policeman personally and were reassured in knowing that he knew what was going on and had contact with the populace.

Many a juvenile crime career was stopped by a quiet word to the parents before the action went too far, or occasionally by a swift application of a boot to the rear.

A traffic police car driving down the road or parked by the side of the road will have a greater effect in slowing traffic and restoring highway order than a car parked on a long stretch of road booking drivers who exceed the speed limit in a relatively safe area.

I give full marks to the police for their "Blue Light Discos". These are having a huge effect on the youth of today. They give the parents peace of mind and the youth somewhere safe to go so that they can enjoy themselves and, at the same time, they are able to see policemen as real people, concerned for their safety and security. All members of the public will continue to support the police and help them in their vital and very difficult job.

However, many policemen are still tied to their desks doing necessary paperwork. There is a need for extra police so that they can maintain that visual presence.

I have made several requests in recent years for extra police to be stationed in the Bunbury region. These requests have been expressed to me by my constituents. I notice an extra 100 police are to be provided this financial year, and I hope the commissioner can see his way clear to putting some into the Bunbury area.

I congratulate the Government on being able to keep Government increases to a minimum for the second year in succession. We are all aware of the problems that the Government had when it came to office in 1983 and found that the expected deficit was likely to be as high as \$30 million. At that stage I know the Government had a difficult decision to make—whether to pass on substantial increases so as to urgently address the financial crises in which it found itself, or to continue on the same path of mismanagement as the previous Liberal Government.

I know that these real decreases in charges and the unprecedented tax cuts in last year's State Budget are the result of hard work and appropriate financial management. The people of Bunbury and Western Australia appreciate this fiscal control. Because the increases are below the rate of inflation, businessmen and wage earners alike have a chance of catching up, at least in one area where the real growth is below the inflation rate.

The Government's management has also been reflected in the confidence in the economy. The rapid growth over the last year is ample evidence that the Burke Government has the confidence of the business people and the ordinary people of Western Australia.

The strong upturn in the State's economy has meant that business is now more active and prosperous so returns to the Government have been higher. Before the last election, the Liberal Party kept asking Brian Burke where was he going to get his money to fulfil his promises. Mr Speaker, I believe the answer is before you. With 2½ years of economic prosperity and indications that the economic growth will continue, there is adequate proof of where the money has come from to fulfil the promises that the Burke Government made. What was promised was not cash, but a sound, competent Government and a prosperous business sector.

As the next election approaches, it is interesting to hear Mr Hassell talk of tax cuts, cuts in Government charges and various other government cuts, along with a steadily growing list of promises, but it will be interesting to hear how, if he gains Government, he intends to pay for his promises because he is, in fact, offering to reduce the amount of income coming to the State Treasury.

In Bunbury, the level of Government-generated economic prosperity is quite evident. The "Bunbury 2000" decentralisation project has injected an air of confidence into the area. There has been a substantial increase in the number and values of new buildings being constructed, in the number of new businesses coming to the town, and in the number of major developers seeking information from the South West Development Authority as to how they can invest in the region. In the central Bunbury district, it is almost impossible to rent floor space for an office or display room at the moment, such is the demand.

Employment has been boosted by State and Federal Government initiatives such as the Community Employment Programme, Westrek, SkillsWest, and the new enterprise scheme. As a result the unemployment rate in the area has been steadily dropping.

Industry is booming and continues to boom; the number of State Housing Commission units built in Bunbury has increased dramatically over the last two years. For the first time for years, it is possible for a person to be allocated a State Housing flat without a long,

frustrating wait. The need for crisis housing is showing a slight decline for the first time in many years.

As far as the principal economic indicators are concerned, Western Australia has done better than the national average on every occasion and far better than States like Queensland, where the National Party confrontationist type of Government continues to promote disharmony amongst workers and business, putting off investors who are looking for a safe place to live and work without fear of police intervention or Government-promoted strikes.

I think that this Government's record in industrial relations is second to none and it is one of the reasons that the businessmen in Western Australia are prosperous and able to feel that they can look forward to a prosperous future.

I am pleased that the improvement rate in the economy in the Bunbury area is even greater than the State rate. There is still plenty to be done. Bunbury and the south-west are great places to live in; it is a great area to work

in. I am pleased to have represented Bunbury during a period of economic growth that is the result of the Burke Government's management and know-how.

Because of this firm fiscal management, Bunbury and the south-west will continue to grow and prosper as long as the Burke Government remains in office.

MR READ (Mandurah) [4.31 p.m.]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [4.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 20 August at 2.15 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.33 p.m.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Mr Mike Binstead: Reinstatement

1. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

In reference to the industrial dispute involving the Building Management Authority foreman and supervisors over the reinstatement by the Minister for Works of the Builders Labourers Federation executive member, Mike Binstead, I ask—

- (1) Did the Minister act with the authority of the Government?
- (2) Is the Premier satisfied that the Minister had sufficiently informed himself of the circumstances to warrant his decision that Binstead be reinstated, bearing in mind Binstead's past record and the reason for his dismissal by those in charge of his employment?
- (3) Is the Premier aware that the Minister backed down from his own suggestion that Binstead be transferred from the Perth Technical College site to the Dumas House site because of the threat of a prolonged, State-wide stoppage by the BLF?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I firstly apologise to the House for the absence of the Minister but unfortunately due to a family bereavement he is unable to be with us today.

The answer to the question is as follows—

- (1) The Leader of the Opposition seeks my opinion about a matter with which I am not fully acquainted but the details of which I am perfectly happy to provide him with in a comprehensive fashion in due course.

I have complete confidence in the Minister for Works that he has not acted without authority in this or indeed any other matter.

Mr Hassell: I asked whether he had acted with the authority of the Government.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the Leader of the Opposition asked whether the matter was referred to in the Cabinet I cannot tell him because I was not here when the matter occurred. I am perfectly happy to check that detail and let him know.

- (2) I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition ask the Minister.
- (3) I am not aware that the Minister "backed down" but I am aware of one thing: The transformation in the character of our community as a result of the elimination of the confrontationist type of approach that was previously practised by the Leader of the Opposition and the Government in which he was a member has been immeasurable.

As His Excellency the Governor stated when Parliament was opened, the number of days lost as a result of industrial disputes has been halved, and in this State the industrial relationship is something that is envied by those employees and unions forced to operate in the atmosphere that has been created, for example, in Queensland, where as a deliberate political tactic and ploy, people seek to set each other at each other's throats with the object of polarising community opinion in the hope that the maximum or the major part of that opinion will be polarised on the part of the provocateur. Let me make perfectly clear that that sort of jack-booted approach to industrial relations went out the window when the previous Government was defeated, and it will not be reinstated during the lifetime of this Government.

LIBERAL PARTY

Privatisation Policy

2. Mr BURKETT, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the State Government support the Liberal Party's ill-defined concept of selling organisations such as the R & I Bank, hospitals, and tertiary education institutions to the private sector?

- (2) What will be the effects of privatisation on the State's financial position?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) At least Government members can be relied upon to ask questions of some significance and meaning! The most enlightening aspect of the member's question was the part that referred to the lack of definition attaching to the Opposition's position because at one stage—and we have lurched from crisis to crisis in the development of this privatisation policy—the Young Liberal Movement suggested that we privatise Rottnest Island. It can be done. We could privatise Rottnest Island; we could sell off the R & I Bank, and we could also make sure that the MTT does not run at a loss; but let me explain to members what it will mean by reference to that last example. We could make sure that the MTT does not run at a loss by selling it to someone prepared to fund a deficit of \$78 million or thereabouts, or alternatively, by increasing fares generally by 128 per cent, except in the case of pensioners and the unemployed, in which cases they would need to rise by 800 per cent. We could eliminate all services on the weekend and we could eliminate also all services after 7.00 p.m. That way the MTT would not run at a loss. The MTT is the most efficient transport trust currently in this country, and it would then not incur a deficit.

Members of the Opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, should understand that the colour and the character, the richness, and the personality of our community depend upon our commitment to each other and our preparedness to provide for those who need special attention and concern from the Government; that the pensioners who use the MTT's services and those unemployed people who are seeking work and who use the MTT's services to go for job interviews and to travel to see relatives and friends do not pay for the other users.

It is easy on a purely profit and loss basis to rob our community of its colour and its personality, and to drain from it the richness that is

represented by cultural centres, museums, and art galleries that will never make a dollar and that will always, at best, be loss leaders. It is a sensitive and delicate balance that Governments must strike between what is the purely profit and loss motivation, and privatising of the SEC, the MTT, Rottnest Island, or whatever, and the colour, the character, and the richness of the community about which we boast. We on this side of the House strike that sensitive and delicate balance at a different point from that which is struck by the Opposition.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

DTX Australia Ltd: Involvement

3. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) What contact has the Premier had with the Corporate Affairs Office over allegations that Government Ministers or members have been involved in the rapid rise of the Western Australian high technology stock of DTX Australia Ltd.?
- (2) Has any of his Ministers had contact with the Corporate Affairs Office over the same allegations?
- (3) Have any Government Ministers or interests associated with Ministers been involved in share dealings with this company?
- (4) Is he aware of the involvement of any Federal members in this matter?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (4) The only thing the member did not ask is whether I have stopped beating my wife! If the member for Nedlands wants to make an allegation and name a Minister, I will pause and give him the time to do so. Presumably the member for Nedlands has some information upon which he has based his question. Perhaps he has some evidence upon which he has reasonably based his question. Let the member for Nedlands tell us about it. Let him make the allegation.

If there is no evidence, I can only presume that, as his father was wont to say so often, the member for Nedlands is on a fishing trip, so I can only tell him, with due respect, what I know of this matter.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The unexpurgated version of the battle of the bulge is still having trouble keeping quiet! It is not difficult to see why members opposite are in Opposition. I can only tell members what I know of this matter, and that is the report that I read in *The Western Mail* in which no allegations were made about any share trading conduct of any Ministers or members of Parliament, but in which some allegations were made about the fluctuations in the price of the company, DTX Australia Ltd.

The only action I have taken is to ask each Minister and the Secretary of the Cabinet whether they have any direct or indirect interest in the company, whether they own any shares in the company, and whether they stand to benefit directly or indirectly from any fluctuation in the price of those shares. Each Minister has assured me that in no case is any benefit to be accrued by him or his family in the movement of those shares. I hope that the Opposition is able to say the same sort of thing about its own members! That is all I can say of my own knowledge about this matter.

The sooner the Opposition stops its character assassination practice the sooner it will restore itself to the good faith and grace of the Western Australian electorate, because in case members opposite have not noticed, there has been a change, and people are rejecting resoundingly the types of politics that permit people, whether they are in Opposition or in Government, deliberately, without substance, without reason, and without any justification apart from the desire for political power, to set about the assassination of the character of people within our community.

BUSINESSES: SMALL BUSINESS

Changes

4. Mr HUGHES, to the Minister for Small Business:

Can the Minister inform the House of changes which have occurred within the economically vital small business sector during the past two and a half to three years?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The member will discover, as some of my friends sitting opposite will, that they have reason for rejoicing when I give them the very essential details which comprise the answer to the member's question. I thank the member for Cockburn for his question which is an indication of the interest that the member has shown in this very important sector since he was elected to the Parliament.

I am delighted to be able to tell members that on the basis of information that was handed to me today by the Small Business Development Corporation, arising out of a very important major study of the small business sector in Western Australia, over the last three years there has been an increase of the order of 10 000 new small businesses in Western Australia.

In the construction sector there has been an increase of 4 500 firms which is a 57 per cent increase. In the wholesale and retail trade sector there has been an increase of 1 700 firms, or 11 per cent; and in the transport and storage sector there has been an increase of 856 firms, or 44 per cent.

In contrast to the growth in the number of small businesses, the number of large businesses in Western Australia has remained static at about 1 940. This growth in the small business sector has also reflected itself in respect of the levels of employment. In terms of the share of employment over the last three years the level of employment in the small business sector has increased from 36 per cent to 42 per cent of the State's work force.

On that sort of evidence there is no doubt in anyone's mind that small business in this State has been the vi-

tal engineer towards the economic recovery that has occurred in the last two and a half to three years.

GAMBLING: CASINO

Genting Berhad: Report

5. Mr THOMPSON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is it correct that before the casino licence was granted by the Government a police report on the Genting Berhad company was prepared?
- (2) If so, where is the report?
- (3) Why has it not been made public?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) to (3) The member is obviously unaware that the Minister who is handling all the negotiations in relation to the casino is the Minister for Tourism, and Minister for Racing and Gaming.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Opposition: Discussions

6. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

- (1) Has he held any further discussions with the Opposition on electoral reform?
- (2) If so, with what results?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) In spite of my frequent requests for discussions with the Opposition on electoral reform, no meaningful discussions have been held. That is to be regretted because it is the Government's belief that an electoral system can and should be devised which is just and fair to all parties—the most important party of which is the people themselves.

The delays in the Opposition's long-heralded package of electoral change is evidence of the disarray in the Opposition camp. There are persons who believe it is time for a decent and just electoral system.

Disturbingly, however, there is also evidence that the intention of the Liberal Party when and if returned to Government is to legislate in such a way that it will never lose another election. If this were to happen this State would be shamed to a greater

extent than is currently the case under the present corrupt electoral laws. I hope for the sake of Western Australia and its people that no such shameful plan will ever be put into operation.

AGRICULTURE: FERTILISER

DAP: Duty

7. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has the Minister or his department made representation to the Commonwealth Government protesting against the application of a dumping duty on DAP fertiliser?
- (2) If not, as this State is more seriously affected by the duty than any other State, will he contact the relevant Commonwealth Minister and request the immediate removal of such a duty?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) I am happy to be able to inform the member that this matter has been taken up with the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. No response has yet been received, but I will ensure that the member is given a full text of it when it does come to hand.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING: COMMUNITY YOUTH SUPPORT SCHEME

Homosexuals

8. Mr MENSAROS, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it in line with or contrary to Government policy to single out unemployed homosexuals for help by the Community Youth Support Scheme as reported recently?
- (2) If this is in line with Government policy, can he please enlarge on this policy?
- (3) If it is contrary to the Government policy, what is the Government doing about such action?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) The Community Youth Support Scheme is a Federal scheme.

Mr Mensaros: I am asking for your opinion.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am happy to answer the member's question as long as he knows that it is a Federal scheme.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Now that the member is aware that it is a Federal scheme I am perfectly happy to give my opinion about it.

Mr Mensaros: What is the Government's policy?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In a formal sense the Government does not have a policy. The member is asking for my opinion and I am not ducking the question. I am happy to tell the member that it is important that people should not be singled out for special assistance on the basis of their sexuality.

If the member believes that the Community Youth Support Scheme is deliberately seeking to direct funds to male homosexuals on the basis of their sexuality rather than whether they are unemployed, I suggest that he take the matter up with the Federal Government.

The member's question has all the overtones of most of the questions that have been asked by the Opposition this afternoon. It is the same

sort of bearing-down approach, the same snide, rigid and inflexible attitude—

Mr Mensaros: Answer the question.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have answered the question and I am giving the part of the answer I will enjoy.

It is the same sort of rigid, inflexible, dogmatic and unyielding coldness—the same lack of judgment and comfort—that is applied by the Opposition to so many of its treatments of different sections of the community.

If the Opposition had its way it would hang every murderer and it would hang every homosexual as well; it would cross its heart and hope that the person concerned would be an Aboriginal who was a homosexual and a murderer.

Several members interjected.

Mr MacKinnon: Who is inflexible now?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: From time to time the Opposition comes out with this type of character assassination and abuse which is its long suit. It suits the Opposition when it is handing it out, but the Opposition once again demonstrates that it cannot cop it.
