

CANNABIS CONTROL BILL 2003

600. Mr C.J. BARNETT to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to his comments on Radio 6PR this morning and in this House yesterday that the Cannabis Control Bill 2003 is aimed at protecting kids who may make a mistake and experiment with cannabis.

- (1) Is the minister aware that this legislation - his legislation - does not apply to people under the age of 18 years?
- (2) Does the minister define experimentation as an unlimited number of cannabis offences, which are permitted under his legislation?
- (3) If, as the minister claims, the Government is attempting to protect children who experiment with cannabis, why does the legislation apply only to adults and not address multiple offences in any way whatsoever?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

- (1)-(3) I will answer the third part of the Leader of the Opposition's question. It does apply. The police have absolute discretion. Unlike the misinformation that was given by the Leader of the Opposition on radio this morning, the Cannabis Control Bill does not decriminalise cannabis. The police always have the option to take criminal sanctions against anybody. In fact, that was supported by the previous Government, and the current Government has not changed that in any way. Rather than go towards a cautionary program that allows people to get a slap on the wrist and walk away, we believe there should be a sanction.

I need to correct a couple of statements made by the Leader of the Opposition. The issue about allowing people to use or grow cannabis is absolute nonsense and misinformation. The only person in this House who is condoning cannabis use is the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: That is not true and you know it.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I remind the member for Carine that she read the questions in the House when Hon Rhonda Parker introduced the previous Government's changes to the cannabis legislation. She should read what occurred that day. She should not have too much to say about this. She condoned a slap on the wrist.

The question today is typical of the misinformation put forward by the Opposition and the campaign of downright untruthfulness that it is conducting in the community. The one thing that was proved in this House yesterday was that the only dope in this House was sitting opposite me.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the members for Nedlands, Kalgoorlie and Carine.

Point of Order

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I thought there were parliamentary standards in this place. The minister has just called somebody in this place a dope. I thought the Speaker was getting to his feet to chastise him. I believe he should take umbrage at what he said.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed