

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SENATE ELECTION

238. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Acting Premier:

Can the Acting Premier please inform the house of the outcome of the recent Senate election and how the Western Australian community has responded to the result?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Are you finished, member for Victoria Park?

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Just for the minute.

The SPEAKER: Just for the minute, are you finished? Member for Swan Hills, please repeat the question.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Can the Acting Premier please inform the house of the outcome of the recent Senate election and how the Western Australian community has responded to the result?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

That is an excellent question. Members may wonder why I would want to get up here and talk about the Senate election when both major parties copped a bit of a kick in the tail. The reason for that is my surprise when I was working on a polling booth in my electorate on election day. This was a Senate election run on federal issues. Lo and behold, amongst the pictures of candidates listed were those of the member for Mandurah and Gary Gray, so a local member and a federal member.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, we note your aspirations!

Dr K.D. HAMES: I understand that that was the case on all the how-to-vote cards across the whole of Western Australia. I do not know that for sure, but I have certainly heard that that was the case. Why would the Labor Party not want to put —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough! I want to hear the Acting Premier.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Why would the Labor Party —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the first time. And, I think, the member for Belmont, I call you to order for the first time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Why would the Labor Party not want to put —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I call you to order now for the first time. Let us get on with this question.

Dr K.D. HAMES: At least I am helping members opposite to crack up with calls to order!

Why would Labor Party members not want to put their two candidates on their how-to-vote paper—Joe Bullock and Louise Pratt? There are two reasons. One is that they did not want Joe Bullock on the paper after what he did. That buffoon, who got into the number one position at the expense of, might I say, a very good candidate in Louise Pratt who was pushed down to number two, made absolutely disgraceful disparaging comments about her sexuality—something that is absolutely none of his business. I can therefore see why they would not want to put him on the paper. Labor Party members obviously conned the federal party into putting all their faces there and having you, Leader of the Opposition, as head of their campaign —

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Especially given that this answer is now turning out to be so lengthy, perhaps you would rule on whether an opinion was sought from the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, because the Acting Premier appears to be just giving an opinion in response to the question asked, which of course is not permitted under the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: Acting Premier.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr K.D. HAMES: Mr Speaker, clearly Labor Party members in Western Australia conned the federal government into thinking that things were getting better in Western Australia. They conned the federal government —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Dr K.D. HAMES: I am sorry; members opposite obviously conned the federal Labor Party into thinking that they were doing better. Were they right? Here they are saying, “We’ve been through our low watermark, we’ve got the lowest vote in the history of the Labor Party in this state. We’re on the way up, Mr Shorten. We’re coming back. We’ve got ’em on the run. We’ve got all the teachers out there marching on Parliament. We’ve got them running.” And what happened, Mr Speaker? The vote was an absolute disaster for the Labor Party. Let us reflect on what the vote was against the Labor Party in the areas where it put its local member on the how-to-vote card. Although the overall vote against the Labor Party was in the order of 4.7 per cent, the Leader of the Opposition’s electorate dropped by 5.79 per cent. The member for Midland —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, I did ask whether you would rule in regard to standing order 77(2), which states that questions should not be repetitive or ask for an expression of opinion and so forth. Clearly, this question asked for an opinion, apart from it being a very, very lengthy answer consuming most of question time.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Midland. The Acting Premier is now giving some facts, from what I understand, and statistics from the election, but I want him to wind this answer up.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, I asked you to rule on the question, not on the answer.

The SPEAKER: The question is in order because of the fact that in Western Australia the Parliament can put Senate candidates in. We have meetings from time to time and we have oversight of the Senate in a way, so I am going to rule that the question stand, but I want the Acting Premier to wind up his answer.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Further to my point of order, I do not appear to have made myself clear to you, Mr Speaker. It is not whether a question to the Acting Premier representing the party leader is in order; I asked for a ruling on whether any question on any topic that asks for an opinion is in order. This question clearly asked for an opinion, and I would refer you again to standing order 77.

The SPEAKER: I understand the question to be about the results of the election, not an opinion; so I will allow the Acting Premier to continue but I want him to wind it up as soon as possible.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr K.D. HAMES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As you will understand from the number of times that you have been on your feet, it is very hard to get a word in edgeways. For the record, I repeat for the member that the question asked for the outcome of the recent Senate election.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: It is not laminated; it is printed on a piece of paper. Is that all right with the member? It is about the outcome of the election.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I want this question to be answered as quickly as possible. I do not want to be jumping up and down. I call you to order for the first time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: To reiterate, in the Leader of the Opposition’s electorate, where his name was on the how-to-vote card for the Senate election, there was a reduction of 5.79 per cent in the vote, and in the electorate of the member for Midland, the reduction was 5.79 per cent. In the electorate of the member for West Swan, there was a swing of 5.5 per cent. In those areas, there was a significant reduction in support for the Labor Party. What do the other Labor Party members think about that? All they have to do is look at comments by people such as Senator Mark Bishop and Alannah MacTiernan —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I want you to wind up please, Acting Premier.

Dr K.D. HAMES: What an absolute flop. Their effort in this election has been an absolutely wasted effort.