

TEACHERS - RESIGNATIONS

108. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Education and Training:

- (1) In the years 2001 and 2005, how many resignations were there from teaching positions with the Department of Education and Training?
- (2) Of these, how many were teachers with fewer than five years' service?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

Mr President -

Hon Simon O'Brien: Hon Barry House asked that question some time ago and you refused to answer it.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: No, I did not.

I thank the honourable member for this very thought-provoking and well thought out question.

- (1)-(2) I am very pleased to correct much of the misinformation that flies around this place about education, because if we listened to members opposite, we would think it is all doom and gloom and that the education system is falling apart. Those opposite never let facts get in the way of a good story! In fact, one bit of mud that has been thrown around for some time is that teachers are leaving the public education system in droves. How many times have I heard that teachers are leaving the system in droves? In fact, it has been said that it is terrible because students will not be able to go into a classroom because there will not be any teachers! The facts simply do not support that statement. In fact, I will compare the number of resignations from teaching positions in the Department of Education and Training in 2001, which is when the Liberal Party left office, with the number of resignations in 2005. There was a huge problem. However, there has been a substantial improvement. For example, there were 402 resignations from teaching positions in the Department of Education and Training in 2001. Do members know how many resignations there were last year? Can members guess? There were 270 resignations last year. Between 2001 and 2005, there is an even more marked decline in the number of resignations of teachers who are fewer than five years into their teaching career. In 2001, 87 teachers resigned fewer than five years into their teaching career, and in 2005 there were substantially fewer resignations; in fact, there were only 42.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You were in power in 2001. These are your figures.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: However, when the Liberal Party was in power, it was even worse. If we listened to members opposite, we would think that the education system is in a major crisis and that there are all sorts of problems. These figures do not reflect that. There might be something wrong with me; I do not know. It does not matter which way I look at these figures, they tell a good story.

In summary, the overall number of resignations over that period are down by 30 per cent and the number of resignations of teachers who are fewer than five years into their teaching career is down by 50 per cent. Obviously, it would be good to reduce even further the number of resignations. The government aims to do that. However, the education system is simply not in crisis.