

PAEDOPHILE

Grievance

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS S.E. WALKER (Nedlands) [10.13 am]: I spoke to a headmaster at a school in the community this morning and I have a copy of a letter he sent to parents. It states, in part -

I have spoken to Channel 7 this morning, as well as to the policeman in charge of the case. I would like parents to be aware of the danger within our own community, but not to be alarmist in our response. I do urge parents to discuss general safety issues with their sons at home, such as

- being aware of personal safety;
- avoiding short-cuts on the way home from school across bush land, park land or golf courses;
- avoiding coming home late at night and alone,
- having a clear understanding with parents about pick up times from school and arrival times at home
- consulting staff at administration areas of the school if boys are unsure of pick-up times

Mr A.J. Carpenter: I recall the incident -

Mr C.J. Barnett: Call him to order! This is a joke.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members!

Ms S.E. WALKER: It continues -

Having discussed this matter -

Mr A.J. Carpenter interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Education and Training and the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. If there is a debate other than this grievance that needs to take place, I suggest it occur outside this Chamber.

Ms S.E. WALKER: It continues -

Having discussed this matter with the Chairman of the College Council and Senior staff, we have decided on the following response:

Staff will speak to boys today about the safety issues noted above, and we are organising follow-up visits with police. While the danger is real, this situation requires careful reminders to boys about safety rather than scaremongering.

Please be assured of . . . commitment to care for your sons adequately, and to keep you informed.

Yours sincerely . . .

I endorse those comments because I am not concerned about scaremongering. The headmaster to whom I spoke this morning and I want to know why it was left to Channel Seven to ring him about this issue in the community. He was then left to ring other schools in the community. He wants to know why no system was in place for the police to contact schools and let them know that a person with these sorts of charges against him was living near the schools. That is the first issue. Secondly, members of the community want to know what the police will do or put in place for their children. I accept that the judicial officer will not revoke bail, and I am not suggesting that the minister pursue the police or the Director of Public Prosecutions about that. However, given the circumstances that exist at the moment, I am disappointed the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is not here, because last night she was aware of this case and could have come into the Chamber this morning. I presume the minister has briefed the Leader of the House.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms S.E. WALKER: The Government Whip keeps carping at me on this serious issue. I have asked my own Whip who is paired today. It is the Attorney General, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Small Business. The Minister for Police and the Minister for Community Development are in the building. Why is the Minister for Police so scared that she does not show up? This is an important issue -

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms S.E. WALKER: This is something about which I could have just spoken to the minister -

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nedlands, please take your seat. Member for Girrawheen, the member for Nedlands has only two minutes and nine seconds left for her grievance. Any member who interjects from now on will be called to order immediately.

Ms S.E. WALKER: The minister could have turned up and I could have told her what I wanted to say without all this palaver. Government members have drawn attention to themselves by their behaviour on this issue. The minister is in the building and is not here to tell us simply what is happening on this issue concerning the protection of children in the community. The Government is putting the reputation and the political spin of the minister before the safety of the children in our community, because it is protecting the minister and is not allowing her to come into the House. The Government has not even had the decency to bring in a minister, such as the Minister for Community Development, who might be able to tell us something about what is happening. It is disappointing to me. Last night I was asked to make a grievance, and I was reluctant to do so because three months ago I raised a question about Alice, a person who was going through a dreadful time at Graylands Hospital because she had been left homeless, and the minister, instead of addressing the issue, had a go at me politically and said, "Of course I will do something." I have not heard from her. My office has rung her office several times. This mentally ill person in our community has had her home sold from under her and the minister has not bothered to respond. Where is the compassion? I came in here today thinking that maybe the minister would be here and that she would do something, or simply say that the police were monitoring the issue. What is happening in the community? What should be done in situations like this? Importantly, what does the minister do when people like this are in the community and there are schools nearby? There is no system in place. I am asking what the minister is going to do about that issue.

The SPEAKER: Before I give the minister the call, I remind him of my earlier comments and ask him to comply with the sub judice rule.

MR J.C. KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [10.19 am]: I certainly will, Mr Speaker. I am disappointed that the member for Nedlands, whilst she is a new member, does not seem to have a grasp of proper procedures in this place.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: In fact, the member for Nedlands purports to be a lawyer, but based on her behaviour in this House, she really drags down the name of lawyers. What she has sought to do is absolutely appalling.

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Members normally have some understanding of what grievances are to be about.

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Kalgoorlie!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Grievances work by members letting the Government know that there is a specific matter to which they wish a minister to respond. The member for Nedlands does not even have the basic intellectual skills to let the Government know that there is an issue to which it can respond. How can the member for Nedlands represent her members when she does not have the skills to understand -

Point of Order

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: If that is a reflection on whether we advised as to the particular grievance -

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsley knows that points of order are raised only if there has been a breach of the standing orders. If the member for Kingsley can refer to the standing order she believes has been breached, she can continue. Points of order are not to be used to break a member's debate, nor are they designed to allow a member to make a comment on the debate.

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: My apologies, Mr Speaker. I was being misrepresented. I wanted to make it clear that the grievance was directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kingsley to order for the second time; and the member for Darling Range was speaking while I was on my feet.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am responding to the grievance. The point I am trying to make is that in order for ministers to respond to grievances, certain procedures must be followed. When a member makes a grievance, it

has to go to a minister who has responsibility for the area. Therefore, members must define the substance of their grievance.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am sure that members on both sides of the House want to listen to what the Leader of the House is saying. The continual drowning out of the Leader of the House will not be accepted. The next member who does so will be called to order.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I take it that members opposite are making rude interjections because they have been caught out not applying the standing orders to grievances. The standing orders for grievances -

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Members opposite have been caught out and they are very embarrassed; therefore, they are yelling and being very rude. They are not interested in listening to the response to the grievance.

It is necessary for the member who wishes to make a grievance to outline the issue he or she wishes to grieve about so that the responsible minister can respond. Last night I was told that the grievance related to the Attorney General's portfolio, even though the Opposition knew at that time that the Attorney General would be paired. The Opposition then decided that it would grieve to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on a different matter. Let us look at what the member for Nedlands said today. The main part of her contribution - other than rambling all over the place - concerned a letter to the Department of Education and Training. The member did not ask to grieve to the Minister for Education and Training. She spoke about a school matter that had been handled by the school. The member for Nedlands did not seek to grieve to the Minister for Education and Training. As I indicated, the grievance as it was relayed to me last night related to an area that is the responsibility of the Attorney General. The issue is that this grievance concerns a police matter that is before the courts and, therefore, is sub judice.

Several opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am somewhat disappointed that during this part of the debate members on my left-hand side predominantly have not been interested in hearing what the Leader of the House has to say. The member for Kingsley has been called to order twice and it is not even 10.30 am. I do not know whether she has done that deliberately. However, I advise that if she continues, her actions will end in the most obvious conclusion.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It seems that the matter that the member for Nedlands wished to raise is clearly sub judice. Two lawyers opposite have been interjecting, and I would have thought that they would have the decency to not put anything on the record that would interfere with a court case. Yet they are all hot under the collar and want to put their grubby political interests ahead of the children whom the apparatuses of the State, through the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions, are seeking to protect by using the proper processes.

What we have from the member for Nedlands is more interest in her own grandstanding than in protecting the children in this State. It is absolutely despicable that a member in this place would seek to undermine the proper process of the law and seek to undermine the sub judice rule in this place for her own political grandstanding. We had a very clear example of that today. That is why those members opposite are interjecting and yelling and have no respect for the standing orders and procedures of this place.

We can understand that people who do not want to protect children - the member for Nedlands is one of them; she is more interested in her own political career than she is in children -

Withdrawal of Remark

Ms S.E. WALKER: I object to the minister impugning my character and suggesting that I do not wish to protect children. That is a disgrace.

The SPEAKER: Once again, I presume -

Mr N.R. Marlborough interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Peel to order for the first time. I presume the member for Nedlands is referring to the fact that if there is any impugnation of a person's character, it should be done through a substantive motion. As far as those comments breached our standing orders, I ask the minister to withdraw them.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The point I am trying to make is that the member for Nedlands has sought to promote her image on the issues of safety of children in our community. That is what she has sought to do. That is clear from what she has done today. When someone does that in a way that in any minor aspect at all could stop the courts locking away someone who should be locked away, that is a very serious matter.

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Nedlands!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The member for Nedlands is yelling and screeching because that is the truth. She has gone on the record today and tried to promote herself in a way that went very close to raising matters that are sub judice. I would have thought that we all want to support the police and the apparatuses of the State to make sure that justice is done. However, that is not what the member for Nedlands is about. She is simply about her own political ego, and she has made that very clear by her contribution today.