

STATE SCHOOL AND TRAINING SECTOR BUDGETS, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION

298. Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD to the Minister for Education and Training:

Someone has to ask the hard questions.

Several members interjected.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Dorotheias from the other side will not do.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! I want to try and get as many questions asked as I can.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: Thank you, Mr Deputy President, I will not be distracted.

What is the federal government's proposed level of contribution to the state school and training sector budgets, and what are the implications for Western Australia's state rights of accepting these contributions?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

I thank the honourable member for such a well thought-out question; it was very thought provoking. This is a very interesting area that needs to be explored. When I looked up two minutes ago I expected to see Hon Barry House having a bit of a snooze, but he was not there and I thought he had gone sleep-walking, but I am pleased that he has returned to his seat.

Hon Barry House: I was in the seat just there, if you had bothered to look.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I know, but I do not know how the honourable member got from there to his seat whilst he was asleep. I just assumed that he was sleep-walking.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, minister! Let us deal with the question. The other point that I make to all members is that whether a member is in his seat or not does not denote whether he is in the house, because if he has left the chamber for a few minutes on parliamentary business, that is part of the role of being a member of Parliament.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

As members know, I have visited Canberra on a couple of occasions since being appointed minister. It is quite clear that the commonwealth government is on a very strong anti-state agenda at the moment. In terms of the quantum of funding for education, we are not talking about a great amount of funds. It represents an eight per cent contribution to this state's education system, and for that sum of money the commonwealth wants to take over WA's education. In the area of training the commonwealth makes a contribution of just over 20.5 per cent through recurrent capital, and for that sum of money it wants the right to dictate what happens in Western Australia in terms of vocational training. I fear the day when Canberra controls this state's vocational education and training system by remote control, and in anyone's language it cannot buy a company for eight per cent. This state's vocational education and training system is not for sale. George Randall was Minister for Education during Federation and he really stood up for state rights, and so have many other Ministers for Education since then. In fact, my three predecessors - Hon Norman Moore, Hon Colin Barnett and Hon Alan Carpenter - stood up for state rights, but the shadow spokesperson for education does not support state rights. In fact he has a contrary view to the former Liberal Minister for Education, Hon Colin Barnett. Instead of being very smug and shooting of all these questions, I would like to ask the opposition spokesperson what his position is in regard to Canberra's intrusion into state rights in the area of vocational education and training. Whilst I am on the subject -

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, minister! We are dealing with questions without notice; that is, other members are asking questions of ministers and parliamentary secretaries. I mentioned earlier that some retiring members may want the opportunity to ask a second question. Will you please wind up your answer, rather than posing questions to the other side?.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes, Mr Deputy President. I thought the public would be interested to know what the member's position was on this matter.

Point of Order

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I claim to have been misrepresented and seek leave to make a very brief statement.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That opportunity will arise, but it will arise after we have concluded question time. I note that the honourable member has reserved his right.

Questions without Notice Resumed

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: A number of members will be here next week. Do any retiring members have any outstanding questions that require an answer?

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Hon Graham Giffard; Deputy President; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Hon Barry House
