

STATE BUDGET — EDUCATION

404. MR N.W. MORTON to the Treasurer:

There have been claims that there have been savage cuts to education in 2015–16. Could the Treasurer clarify what funding has been provided to ensure our students have the best possible educational environment in which to learn?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

I would like to thank the member for Forrestfield for that question. As the member would know, he has been in the house for a couple of years now and has heard this uttered repeatedly by the people opposite and their fellow travellers in the wider Labor movement. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago the State School Teachers' Union of WA came out, as did the Leader of the Opposition, and said that we have slashed and burned education.

Mr P.C. Tinley: It's true.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, right! The member says it is true. Let me go through a few facts here. Education has been one of our priority areas; it has been since the inception of this Liberal–National government all the way through. We have increased spending—I repeat, increased spending—by 47 per cent. We have the highest paid teachers in the nation. Our expenditure per pupil is 30 per cent above the national average. Remember the Gonski move? The reason we were not getting any money out of Gonski—we have already done it! Of course, we have done away with—what was it called?—outcome-based education that the other mob came up with that almost destroyed the public system. That has gone. In this budget we have increased spending on schools by 6.5 per cent, or \$600 per pupil. Where do members opposite get these cuts from? What kind of bizarre world do they live in when down is up and up is down and everything is negative? A hallmark of this government has been expenditure on capital. From 2008 to 2018–19, we have committed to spend \$5.2 billion on schools. A lot of it has been borrowed, which is what members opposite are complaining about. I would like to read out some of these —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Warnbro, I do not want to hear you either.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I would like to have some participation from the people opposite. When I read out these projects, they can tell me which ones they did not want: Baldivis Secondary College, \$26.3 million; Butler College, \$32 million and completed in 2015.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He asked us to interject; he invited it.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. The Treasurer should direct everything through the Chair. This is not some type of discussion across the chamber, so I ask members not to take up the offer.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Primary schools to be completed in 2016—Ellenbrook, Annie's Landing.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Harrisdale, Alkimos, Baldivis.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Willagee, that is enough; I call you to order for the first time.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is \$60 million in total. They are decrying our spending, but has anyone heard them any way, any time saying that these were not absolutely necessary? Willetton Senior High School—a fine school—that the opposition committed to in the last election. There are four new primary schools in Alkimos, Baldivis, Bedford and Lansdale. There is Byford Secondary College and north Ellenbrook senior school, which is a new secondary school to be completed in 2018. I do not hear the member for West Swan screaming as usual!

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Member for Fremantle —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: This is a two-part point of order. The first part is about the length of the dorothy dixer answer, which is, frankly —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Points of order are to be heard in silence.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Frankly, the Treasurer could have made a brief ministerial statement. This is an abuse of question time by the Treasurer.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I understood that you instructed him not to invite interjections. The Treasurer is on his feet now, goading a member on this side by basically saying, “I do not hear you interjecting.” He is actually calling upon this side to be unruly.

The SPEAKER: Treasurer, stop making my life difficult. I want a short answer. We have got the gist of it so let us get moving.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: On this side we are passionate about education.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the second time. Member for Mandurah, I call you to order for the first time. I want a quick answer and a quick end to this, thank you, Treasurer.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: On this side we are passionate about education. We have put our money where we said we would. We have invested in education comprehensively. We are rebuilding the infrastructure of high schools and primary schools around this state, and all we get from the other side is whinging and whining, whinging and whining. If it was left to them, we would not have enough teachers in front of classrooms and they would be in leaking schools.