

EDUCATION SYSTEM, REMOVAL OF "TIRED" TEACHERS

3. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Education and Training:

I congratulate the minister on her appointment. I refer to one of the minister's first statements that she would move tired, old teachers - her term - out of the education system to make way for younger, more enthusiastic people - her term again.

- (1) How will this be done and what mechanism will be used?
- (2) What will the cost to taxpayers be and what other areas of the education budget will suffer as a result?
- (3) Why does the minister not value the collective and individual experience and knowledge that these senior teachers provide to the education of our children?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

- (1)-(3) When Hon Barry House came into the chamber this afternoon, I said that I had been waiting for him. Here I am. The first thing Hon Barry House should know is that if he is to ask me a question without notice, he does not need to advertise it in *The West Australian*.

Hon Ken Travers: It is disrespectful to the house.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Absolutely. Hon Barry House advertised or gave a lead on the sorts of questions he intended to ask. I saw the reference to the quote coming. In fact, the direct quote that he made was inaccurate. He is right in that I referred to tired teachers, but in my interview I did not refer to tired, old teachers. His side of the chamber has perpetuated this idea that I am saying that we will get rid of older teachers. He was in the education system, I have been in the education system, and many other members may also have been in the education system. The simple fact is that it does not matter whether people are 55, 65 or 30 years of age; the government is aware that some individuals may for whatever reason feel trapped in the education system. They may feel as though their opportunities are limited. Consequently, they may, according to others, not be pulling their weight. However, I want to acknowledge the vital role of Western Australia's 21 000 teachers in the state's public education system. The success of the Gallop government's initiatives will largely depend on those professional, highly committed teachers with the skills and resources and the motivation to deliver those initiatives. That is why each of these initiatives includes a substantial component for professional development, resources and the support of teachers. The simple fact is that we need good teachers in the education system. They are absolutely vital, because the simple equation is that we cannot have students if we do not have teachers. I am interested in having the absolute best public education system for Western Australian students. I am interested in having the absolute best quality teachers to teach Western Australian students. I am interested in having a comprehensive education system that meets the future needs of our economy. I am confident that most teachers meet or exceed the expectations of parents, the community and the government. However, the fact is that there are a few teachers who are unable or unwilling to make the necessary commitment. For some of those teachers, the school has been their only work environment, and they may well feel as though their options are limited. Therefore, I have no hesitation in suggesting that they be helped to find alternative employment. The system will not suffer. The system will be strengthened by this initiative. I could stand here and say that we do not have an issue in this regard. The fact is that we do have an issue in this regard, and I intend to address it.