

POLICE OFFICERS - RESIGNATIONS

729. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Can the minister please advise the house of the actual resignations by police officers in each of the past three months?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for the question. The official figures provided to me by the police indicate that in August this year, 23 officers resigned; in September this year, 29 officers resigned; and in October this year, 29 officers resigned. They are the police figures. I was absolutely astounded yesterday, as I think most members were, that the Leader of the Opposition asked what strategies had been put in place to disguise from the Western Australian public that the number of officers leaving WA Police was much higher than the 30 a month admitted in official WA police statistics. That was clearly a slur on police. I asked the Leader of the Opposition to provide evidence for his assertion. The Leader of the Opposition said by way of interjection yesterday that he would provide us with the evidence. Where is the evidence?

Mr P.D. Omodei: Can I just suggest to you that you actually talk to Mike Dean because the evidence came from Mike Dean. He has said that they are between 300 and 500 police officers short and that you haven't provided those statistics. Will you talk to Mike Dean about this issue and will you provide the statistics?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition has been caught out again. He said a number of things. I can pick them apart one by one. When members opposite are caught out, they normally start to talk about something else. The Leader of the Opposition asserted that the official figures sought to disguise from the Western Australian public the number of police officers leaving per month, and that the figure was much higher than 30. I have given the figures for the past three months.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Hillarys and the member for Murray.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Leader of the Opposition simply made up that figure. It is absolutely scandalous that he made up that figure and then used it to assert that the police were somehow surreptitiously trying to change or hide the actual figures. The Leader of the Opposition - hearing the knives being sharpened behind his back - comes in here and attacks the Western Australia Police with a totally false assertion, demonstrating the absolute lack of leadership on the other side of the house. The opposition is not willing to do the work to get the facts right and now we find the Leader of the Opposition using false information in an attempt to slur the WA Police. Does the Leader of the Opposition have any evidence for his assertion that more than 30 police are retiring in a month?

Mr P.D. Omodei: You have been caught out. Why don't you ask Mike Dean? I am challenging you to go to Mike Dean

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that Mike Dean gave him that information? The Leader of the Opposition now blames Mike Dean for that information.

Mr P.D. Omodei: That information was provided to me by the secretary of the police union.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will check that information out because I have found Michael Dean to be a man of his word; which is something I have not found the Leader of the Opposition to be. I have not found the Leader of the Opposition to be a person willing to speak the truth. I suspect that -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Please do! I think you have been caught out, jiminy cricket.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I have given the Leader of the Opposition the truth. He came in here and said something yesterday that was wrong! Not only that, the Leader of the Opposition used wrong information to cast a slur on the commissioner and the police service because the police service provides the official figures. I have nothing to do with it. The Leader of the Opposition actually attacked the WA Police with false numbers that have been shown to have no validity whatsoever.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has shown us that he has to seek to protect Hon Shelley Archer and Hon Anthony Fels because they have been caught out knowingly telling untruths in an official situation. Now the Leader of the Opposition has been shown up in this house for saying things yesterday that were absolutely untrue. It is despicable to use untrue statements to slur the WA Police. What sort of member do we have here? Will the Leader of the Opposition apologise? A man who thinks that he can slur the WA Police and not apologise for it is a man who sinks lower and lower everyday. The sharpening of the knives has rattled the Leader of the Opposition! He has come in here and made a false assertion about the police and is not willing to apologise. That is absolutely despicable and I think the people behind him will sharpen the knives even faster

because they know that they have no chance while they have a leader who has no regard for the truth. When the Leader of the Opposition makes statements as facts that have no basis in truth, he brings down the rest of the members on his side of the house and that is why he will not be the Leader of the Opposition for very much longer.