

Hon N.F. Moore: Had I given you an hour of question time today, you would not be in that position. I would have been happy to do that today.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I understand that. The Leader of the House mentioned that to me previously, and it simply increased my apprehension about the possibilities that were available to the Leader of the House by virtue of the length to which members on this side of the House were going in support of these proposals.

Hon N.F. Moore: Do you support the selective extension of question time?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: On some occasions I am more supportive of the extension of these things than on others. We have reached the end of what has been for many of us a tough six months since the last state election. That applies to many members in this Chamber. Some members are fresher than others because they have been here for only a few weeks.

Hon Mark Nevill: Some members want to sit next week!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am not one of those. I appreciate the effort that members have made to pursue their roles in the Parliament. From time to time that takes us in different directions and puts us in conflict with one another. That is exhausting for us all, but that is part of the process of serving our constituencies in the way we believe those constituencies are best served.

I thank all those people in this House who make our lives easier than they may otherwise be. It has been a tough period for me. Previous Leaders of the Opposition have said regularly how tough the job is. I used to think it looked like such a breezy and easy job! I had no idea how tough it can be to occupy this seat. I appreciate the support that so many people have given me.

Hon Barry House: Is this a farewell speech?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It may be! In the ups and downs of politics, who knows? I do not expect that to be the case, but that is the way of politics.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You have heard of the famous book!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is right.

I thank you, Mr President, for your help during this period. I hope that we all have a decent break to work in our electorates and perform our other duties beyond this Chamber, and that we can return to this Chamber after that seven weeks of immersion into the Western Australian community and continue to improve on the arrangements that are now in place in this House. I am committed to that process. I can understand why that is difficult for the Leader of the House. I believe it will be smoother sailing for us all from now on -

Hon Mark Nevill: As soon as we can lay our hands on the rudder!

Hon Ken Travers: Hon Tom Stephens is buying drinks afterwards!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Perhaps with this good humour we will be able to return from this recess with a renewed determination to take a cooperative and collaborative approach to serving the interests of the Western Australian community, based on trust and confidence in each other, despite the fact that we are opponents across the Chamber on a range of issues. I look forward to those opportunities as they emerge.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [5.26 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Women's Service Guild

HON CHERYL DAVENPORT (South Metropolitan) [5.26 pm]: I wish to pay tribute to a Western Australian institution that today disbanded as an organisation. I am speaking about the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia Inc, which this morning held its closing ceremony after 88 years of service to this State. I was proud to be invited to attend that ceremony as the Opposition spokesperson on women's interests. I am sorry that the Government did not see fit to send a parliamentary representative; the representative of the Premier was a departmental person.

It is important that after nine decades of service by the Women's Service Guild, we acknowledge the women who have served that organisation well. Before the closure of this organisation, it launched a book of its history entitled

Women on the Warpath, Feminists of the First Wave, written by Dianne Davidson, whom I have known for a number of years and who has written a very comprehensive publication. The introduction of the book states -

In 1928 a visiting Victorian feminist hailed tiny, isolated Perth as 'the Mecca of the Women's Movement in Australia', and the source of 'streams of inspiration and knowledge to the rest of the continent'.

This tribute, unimaginable today, was prompted by the work of the Women's Service Guilds, a remarkable organisation born in 1909 as part of the first wave of feminism in Australia. At its zenith in the 1920s and 1930s it was a powerful force for social reform, and stood in the forefront of the many activist women's groups which existed at that time throughout the country.

The Women's Service Guild was one of the organisations that was instrumental in the establishment of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, of kindergarten education in this State, of the Girl Guides Association, and of the home for older women, which was then at Mt Henry Hospital, which closed its doors recently. It was responsible for the establishment of organisations such as the Civil Rehabilitation Council of Western Australia, the Prisoners Aid Society, the Society for the Preservation of Nature, which in the early days was concerned with keeping the Swan River foreshore in good condition for future generations, and also for the establishment of the pioneer women's memorial in Kings Park.

Its philosophical position was dedicated towards improving the quality of life of Western Australian women and children over those years. It was dedicated in particular to ensuring that women received equal pay for work of equal value. Theoretically, that has now been achieved. Unfortunately, we are once again falling behind and that is largely due to the move from a centralised wage fixing system to a deregulated labour market. It is something about which all members should be vigilant.

The Western Australian Women's Service Guild has had as members many prominent women. Members may remember some of them and I refer to Bessie Rischbieth, Jean Beadie, Irene Greenwood and Florence Hummerston and former members of Parliament, Edith Cowan, Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver, Ruby Hutchinson, the first woman member of the Legislative Council, and Wendy Fatin who was the federal member for Canning and then Brand from 1983 to 1993.

One of the older women said at the closing ceremony this morning that many daughters followed their mothers as contributing members of the Women's Service Guild. Its motto was "By love we served".

At today's final meeting a very important announcement was made. The Women's Service Guild will continue to be remembered by a scholarship for which the trust organisation will be Murdoch University. It is ground breaking as people can apply to study at any Western Australian university. The trust foundation has \$600 000 provided by the guild from property sales. A three year doctoral scholarship is to be awarded at \$21 000 a year, which I understand is at the higher end of scholarships. The scholarship will provide for a doctoral research in medicine and associated fields for the benefit of women and children. It is essentially to look at the prevention of disease and, obviously, that will take into account breast cancer and the reasons women contract such cancer, and immunisation.

I place on record the congratulations of all members for the many years of service to the community by an organisation which has had as activists many wonderful women who have served the community of Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.32 pm
