



**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**



**HON PADDY EMBRY, MLC**  
(Member for South West Region)

**Legislative Council**

**Valedictory Remarks — Motion**

**Thursday, 19 May 2005**



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**HON PADDY EMBRY (South West)** [2.53 pm]: It seems only a short time ago that I made my first speech in Parliament. I suppose when we consider Hon Norman Moore and his time in Parliament, it really was only a short time ago. I probably covered most of what I wanted to say over the past couple of weeks. I asked whether it was customary to have valedictory speeches, and I did not seem to get an answer. People were not sure. I understand why they were not sure. Therefore, I have nibbled away at it a little over the past month.

However, I would like to say that first impressions in life are very important. The grounds at Parliament House are so well cared for that it is a pleasure to arrive here for work. It is a privilege to work here. As people drive in, they see the gardens. I want to make particular mention of the gardening staff who, when we arrive, seem to be blowing the leaves to make the place look tidy. It is great that they do it, and I admire how conscientiously they do it; but what a mind-blowing exercise it is when they know that there will be even more leaves there the next morning! It is a tremendous credit to them. It is very important that this building and its surrounds look as good as they do. Probably one of the parts that I admire most is that wonderful gum tree at the northern end of the main steps of Parliament House. In particular, when it is lit at night, it is a very special tree. I do not think that the new minister, Mark McGowan, would have quite the same feelings about that tree as do I at the moment. However, I am sure that in time that will pass.

**Hon Kim Chance:** It did wait for him to get out of the car.

**Hon Simon O'Brien:** Stupid tree!

**Hon PADDY EMBRY:** The thoughtful tree. It is always dangerous to name people, so I will not name any staff. I guess the person who I was told was God was Mr Laurie Marquet, so I will certainly name God as a person who has been particularly helpful. Of course, all his staff have been helpful. All the staff in every department in this place - in the whole building - are, I believe, very friendly, correct, helpful and 100 per cent neutral. That is a remarkable achievement, and I thank them all for that. My shape probably shows that my favourite department operates in the bowels of this building, and it brings its wares up to the first level.

I had considerable trepidation at becoming a member of Parliament. It was not a lifelong ambition. In fact, my involvement with One Nation really happened by accident. However, for me, what a wonderful accident it was. I have really enjoyed my time in this place. It has been a privilege to be here. At risk, I will mention some members who have been particularly helpful to me. I must add that as I was elected under the One Nation banner, part of my trepidation was as a result of the stories that were perpetrated by the media and some of the leading politicians in this country, which were, I would say, 100 per cent untruthful. A person would not be human if he did not have some misgivings about the sort of reception he would receive. I had no background in politics. The very first member I met was Hon George Cash. That was a great start, and I thank you, George, for your initial help and the help that has always been available. I guess because I sit on the conservative side - there is no doubt I am a conservative - I can say that every member on the conservative side in this place has been helpful. However, there is no doubt that Hon George Cash and Hon Norman Moore have been extremely helpful. Perhaps Hon Peter Foss has not always been helpful, which is interesting. I guess because we have been friends for more than 30 years, I have been reluctant to go to Peter because I value the friendship more, and I would not put that at risk. In later times, Hon Barbara Scott has been a good friend. The first time I heard Hon Derrick Tomlinson give a speech he produced the book *Mein Kampf*. I am pleased that he has lifted his game and has improved also. Hon Adele Farina has been on both committees on which I have served. Indeed, she was the chairman of one of them. She has been very free with her advice and a good friend; she is a hardworking member. I know the distances she covers in the south west, because I too cover great distances. We always seem to be bumping into each other. When I entered Parliament, I did not know whether the Leader of the House, Hon Kim Chance, would be helpful to me, but he has been. I pay a compliment to Hon Kim Chance, which applies to almost every member. We can be almost as aggressive as we want to be in the chamber. On one occasion I got under the skin of the Leader of the House and he was white with fury when the bells rang for a suspension. He was almost out of the chamber when I asked him whether I could have the benefit of his advice. He wheeled around and there was a split-second pause before he smiled at me and said, "Of course, come and have a cup of coffee". I believe in the great fellowship we experience here. With very few exceptions, we seem to be able to share our differences of opinion, which we enjoy, but also remain civilised people outside the chamber.

I thank Hansard staff for making my often fairly bumbling speeches into something that generally does not look too bad in the written word. I single out Hansard because I have found it to be absolutely fantastic. Sometimes we are at risk of forgetting the council staff who work in the Hay Street committee rooms because most of the time they are located away from Parliament House. They have been most understanding in helping me, as one with no political background, and have steered me on the right course.

Another trepidation I had upon entering Parliament was the need to make speeches. As a child I suffered very badly from stuttering. Occasionally it rears its head but I have been lucky that it has not been too bad in the chamber. I had some trepidation about working at a place in which I was required to give speeches. I felt like resigning when Hon George Cash told me that my inaugural speech needed to be at least 20 minutes long. The reception given to new members of Parliament from people in the gallery and the swearing-in ceremony also added to my trepidation. I am certainly not a coward. Trepidation is different from cowardice, but one did wonder.

I thank all members for putting up with me. I guess they did not have a lot of choice, but they have put up with me. I thank my electorate staff, whom I do not need to name. They know who they are. I thank my family. They were probably pleased that I was elected because it meant I was further away from them! I thank the people of the south west who voted for me. I thank in particular the people who worked very hard for three years to get the representative whom they wanted elected to this place.

I was interested to hear members speak about preferences. Hon Barry House touched on it earlier. I think there is a problem with the preference system in the upper house. Even the small portion of the public that has an interest in politics has absolutely no idea where the preferences flow. They may know where the second preferences flow, but they do not have much of an idea about the rest of the preferences. The development of a more obvious system would be a big improvement. Printing the preferences in fine print over four or five pages in Saturday's paper three weeks before the election does not get the message across. We have seen - this is no slur on the Greens (WA) - that the National Party, which some would call the farmers' party, helped elect a member of the Greens with its second preferences. Some of the Greens lifestyle policies are not compatible with what most farmers want. I am not being personal; I am talking about the result. The National Party supporters have not elected a member who suits the party's policies. It is not their fault or the fault of the Greens; it is the fault of the system - it is really the National Party's fault; I will be blunt about it.

I will miss some aspects of working here but I look forward to leaving others, although not many. Leaving Parliament is probably similar to having a blood transfusion, although it is not a total transfusion for those members who have been here for only a short time. Hon Norman Moore will probably need five or six transfusions when his time comes. It has been a wonderful privilege to work here. It is a privilege that one does not understand until one gets involved and realises the responsibilities and trust that people put in members. It is daunting to learn of people's expectations. They approach members with problems that are almost impossible to solve, but they trust that members will solve them. Sometimes members can and sometimes they cannot. It is quite humbling.

Some very debatable legislation has been passed. Hopefully that legislation can be amended as time goes on. I hope that some of the legislative changes will be amended. I refer to not only electoral changes, although that is one of them, but also social changes. I hope that in future both houses keep abreast of how the tide changes. I am not a total right-to-lifer but I am more of a right-to-lifer than many people. I urge members in the future to consider the rights of the unborn child. I will leave it at that.

I thank members very much for putting up with me. I have enjoyed my time here and I will come back from time to time, not to haunt members but to enjoy their company.

[Applause.]