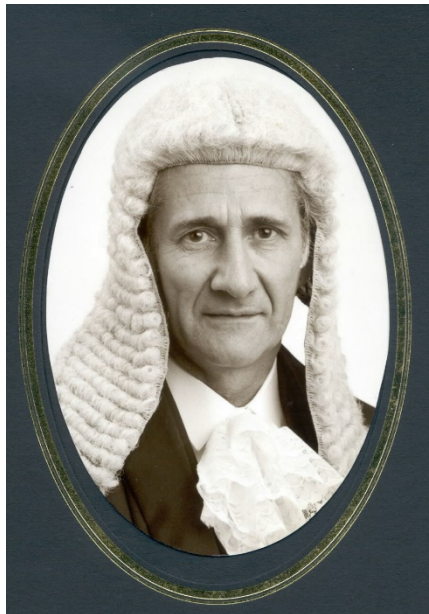




PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



Hon Clive Edward Griffiths, MLC

President

Legislative Council

Adjournment of the House — Ordinary

Wednesday, 13 November 1996

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ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE — ORDINARY

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral — Leader of the House) [1.09 pm]: I move —

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate — Valedictory Speech by the President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths): Before I put the question I want to say a few words. The nearly 20 years that I have held office as President have been years of significant change for the Legislative Council. When I was first elected in 1965 the franchise for this House had only recently been made the same as that for the Assembly, and each of us had a six year staggered term. Provinces have since been replaced by regions and staggered terms have given way to fixed four year terms with all members facing election at the same time. I agree with Hon Philip Lockyer that it is a crummy system, but it happens to be what we have.

The evolutionary signposts for the Legislative Council between now and then are easily identified. It is far more difficult to describe the character of the House and how that has changed over the past 20 or 30 years. The supposedly golden days of leisurely consideration of business have well and truly gone. Members of Parliament are subject to prevailing views and influences in the community and in this age of performance indicators and output measurements there is an expectation that members of Parliament will also respond and perform. What many do not appreciate is that members 30 years ago worked equally hard as they do now. The difference is that, as a group, today's politicians are made more visible and their activities scrutinised more intensely by the media. Unfortunately, greater media coverage and scrutiny has tended towards the superficial treatment of political issues and politicians' activities in cases where more informed treatment is often called for. We have all experienced the frustration of having to stand by and watch the news media do less than justice to the facts that are known to us. The solution is not to muzzle the Press or cut back on parliamentary privilege; rather, it is to ensure that the Press maintains its freedom and carries out the obligation to report fairly and accurately.

There was a time in the 1980s when I thought that there would be a concerted effort to abolish this House or make it redundant by cutting off its funding and letting it die slowly and publicly. That was the down side. The good side was that the House took the hint, made substantial changes to its procedures and, most importantly, moved to establish a committee system. The committee system has given members a better understanding of what they can achieve collectively while at the same time providing members with better information on which to base their opinions and judgments. Committees give people and groups a new parliamentary forum in which they can express their attitudes towards legislation and, through the handling of petitions, see issues of interest to local communities around the State dealt with constructively. Committee visits to places outside the metropolitan area and even the country provide an important bridge between members and electors. However, a committee system relies for its success on the informed participation of members of the House and their collective sense of the worth of a bicameral parliamentary system. Without this conviction even the most far reaching reforms will be cosmetic in effect and will not save this House from eventual abolition. However, I have confidence that even the most ardent abolitionist who comes into this Chamber will understand and appreciate the value of this House and its legitimacy if, despite political differences, the collegiate spirit is fostered. It is for you and your successors to ensure that the House retains its relevance.

As the President it has been my privilege to serve this House to the best of my ability, and that has not always seen me head the popularity stakes on all occasions. I know there have been times when Governments and Ministers would cheerfully have willed anybody but me to occupy this Chair. My rulings have sometimes been inconvenient, irksome, annoying and unwelcome, but nevertheless they were reasoned. Members could at least point to where they thought I had gone wrong. Rulings without reason add nothing to the evolution of our custom and usage, without which many of the formal rules lack meaning and context. Those adverse reactions suggest that I have done what is expected of a Presiding Officer in the Westminster tradition: To act in the interests of the whole House regardless of who occupies the government benches. I take comfort from the fact that you elected me to office first in 1977 and successively since then. I urge you to keep the practice whereby the President retains office for as long he or she retains the confidence and support of the House despite changes of Government. The presidency should not be a spoil of office given to a member who misses out on a place in the Cabinet. Incidentally, I had two opportunities to go into the Cabinet. The presidency is too crucial to the proper functioning of our system of government to be treated as a consolation prize.

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Like anyone who holds public office I have been supported in my electorate and parliamentary duties by countless people. I genuinely thank them all. I hope I can hold myself together to thank people.

Hon Tom Stephens: Do you want me to crack a few jokes along the way?

Hon Graham Edwards: Throw him out!

The PRESIDENT: I remind the member of what I often say: You do not have to like what I say, or believe it, but you do have to listen to it.

The first thing I want to do is to thank my family. Thirty-two years is a lifetime. As has been mentioned by other members, without our families it would be impossible for any member of Parliament to do his or her duty. I place on the record my thanks to Hon Bill Grayden, who was responsible for ensuring that I was elected in the first place. I want to thank the Liberal Party; in particular, the Swan division of the Liberal Party, which was the division from whence I came. I single out from all the hundreds of people from that division Mr Bernard Wright, who steadfastly stuck with me over the years and ran campaigns for me and made sure I had the resources to run those campaigns.

I pay tribute to John Roberts, who was the Clerk of the Parliament when I first was elected, and to John Ashley, who followed him. Those two people gave me the basic understanding of this parliamentary system. I thank the two secretaries who were here when I first came in, Norma Turton and Bernice Downe. In those days two secretaries serviced the whole of the Parliament. Those two people worked very hard for all of us, irrespective of our political parties. I pay tribute to the then President of the Legislative Council, the late Sir Leslie Diver, who had a great influence over me.

I recall some members—not necessarily in any order. Hon Roy Abbey sat where Hon Phil Lockyer now sits, and at one time I sat alongside him, in the seat currently occupied by Hon Murray Criddle. Roy Abbey gave me a lot of support and help. Hon Frank Willmott sat where the Chairman of Committees is currently sitting. He and Roy Abbey shared my first office with me, a tiny office on the top floor of the building. They were subjected to every speech I made three times: I practised in my room before we came into the Parliament; I made the speech in the Parliament; and I went over it again when we went back into our room. They had three shots at hearing it, and they were good people.

In those days the Leader of the House was the late Sir Arthur Griffith. I did not get on with him all that well, but he was a great leader and he knew this parliamentary system and how to operate within it. Earlier somebody mentioned that the best orator in this place was the late Hon Graham MacKinnon. I agree with that. He was a great help to me. One of the bits of advice he gave to me I will not repeat! It was typical of him; he was a pretty tough character. A far better orator, and one who was far more informed on the procedures and the rules of this place and the laws of the Parliament was the late Hon Frank Wise. He was then the Leader of the Opposition and he sat where Hon Kim Chance now sits.

Members have mentioned that there have been changes—in 32 years, there have been a lot of changes. I say this to Hon Graham Edwards: He may well think that at times I did not make the right decision; however, if Frank Wise were here, he would have voted with the President on every issue. In those days if anybody misbehaved, there was never a division. The only person who would have been on the other side would have been the person who was named. Mention has been made of the fact that I broke my record: I set out never to name anybody in this place. Hon Tom Stephens knows why he was named. He is a very intelligent person. I am not quite so sure that Hon Alannah MacTiernan knows why she was named, but there was a very good reason for it. The difference between some members and others is that they withdrew their comments or apologised. I have a bit of an idea—Hon Tom Stephens will tell me whether I am right one of these days—that he deliberately set out to make sure I did not get through my long parliamentary career without naming somebody, and he set himself up as that person. I am digressing a little, but I am sure Hon Tom Stephens knows I respect, appreciate and understand the dedicated way in which he goes about what he does in this Parliament, notwithstanding that on occasion I may have growled at him.

I remember Hon Bill Willesee. I have said this before, and I will say it again: If the Labor Party in Western Australia ever builds a monument to one of its members, he is the first person I would suggest. He is a gentleman, a member who came from the north of Western Australia, who shifted to the metropolitan area. He had done to him what Hon Phil Lockyer said has been done to other people in this place. When the Government changed, Hon Bill Willesee sat in the seat now occupied by Hon Norman Moore. The numbers were 20 to 10 against him; however, he managed to run and control this Chamber without ever having to resort to raising his voice, or to character assassination of one of the 20 on the other side, of whom I happened to be one at that time. Of all the members of Parliament, he was not the most academically qualified or the most articulate, but he had an ability to do the job as Leader of the Government in this Chamber in a very competent and dignified way. I am sorry I have not seen Bill for a while.

Hon Les Logan, who sat where the Minister for Finance, Hon Max Evans, now sits, was an incredible person with a photographic memory. He knew the subject matter of that about which he was speaking. He could speak in very confident and positive terms. He could read a volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and recite it immediately. He was a great bloke.

I will refer to some people in the other Chamber. I have been very lucky in my time here. I was lucky to get elected in the first place because I needed a big swing and Hon Tom Butler working against me. I have met some beautiful, wonderful people. I was lucky to come in here in an era where people cared about each other. I remember the late Sir David Brand, our leader. He was a very humble and simple person, the Premier of this State for a record period. I learned many things from him. None of the present members of this Parliament had an opportunity to serve with people like the late Bert Hawke, the previous Premier of this State. He had no pretensions and no hatred for people who did not believe in his political point of view. He shared with us any knowledge he had and he offered his advice and assistance when he had no need to do so. After he retired from Parliament and went back to South Australia, I felt very privileged that after I became President, he always paid a courtesy call on me whenever he came to this Parliament.

Those were the sorts of people who were members of this place. Sir Charles Court was our deputy leader when I first came here, and he subsequently became our leader. He was a very strong and different leader from Sir David Brand. I also owe a lot to Sir Charles. I was the party secretary at the time, but the one thing he did not know anything about was running a meeting. I was the secretary and I made the rules, which made me pretty powerful for a while. Sir Charles Court was a great leader, Premier and friend of mine.

I do not have time to run down the entire list of members in the 1965 *Hansard*. Most of the members listed are dead. I feel as though I came here only yesterday—I feel new; I do not feel an old member. The list contains the late Hon Keith Watson. I have already mentioned the late Hon Frank Wise, who was probably one of the most brilliant members of Parliament I ever met. Hon Harry Strickland sat where Hon Murray Montgomery sits, and I sat in the middle of that bench.

I am rambling a little now, but in those days when a member came into the Chamber he or she was allocated a seat which was retained for the rest of his or her days in Parliament. We had none of the nonsense of the Opposition on one side of the House and the Government on the other side. Apart from the three Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition and the two Whips, the allocation of seats never changed. The Government would change, but members stayed in their allocated seats. Hon Roy Abbey, Hon Harry Strickland and I sat on cross-benches. Members were all over the place. Members became very close friends with the members next to whom they sat. They talked to them. When a member was making a speech, the speech notes were kept on the bench. If one wanted to oppose what was being said, one could easily grab the notes to use in making one's speech in favour of a different point of view!

Hon Ruby Hutchison was the first lady elected to this place. I was privileged to serve in this place with her. She spent a lot of time trying to abolish the Legislative Council, but she could not find a seconder, even from among her colleagues, every time she moved to introduce a Bill to do so. However, Ruby Hutchison was a wonderful lady who always gave me a hug and a kiss—I reckon she was fantastic.

I recall Hon Jack Heitman and Hon Eric Heenan. The first member of Parliament I can ever remember meeting was Eric Heenan. When I was a schoolboy in Morawa, he visited the school. I thought this guy was some sort of king of Australia because of his eminence and stature. I understand that Eric is still alive and has eyesight problems. He was a very good solicitor and would give us the benefit of his legal advice.

There was only one Hon Fred Lavery, a dedicated member of the Labor Party. He sat where Hon John Halden now sits. Three seats were behind the current opposition frontbench and he sat in the middle seat. He would get stuck into the Government and Hon Frank Willmott who was sitting on the other side of the House. He was very excitable, not unlike Hon Tom Stephens.

Hon Tom Stephens: He must have been a great bloke!

The PRESIDENT: He was very passionate about the matters he raised. He was highly emotional about his speeches. In those days the *Hansard* books were piled high on the desks in the Chamber. Towards the end of the year members would be almost hidden behind a huge stack of these books. It was not until Laurie Marquet suggested that we did not need them on the desks that the place was tidied up. Fred was a big guy with hands like frying pans. One day Frank Willmott was giving him a few unruly interjections, so Fred picked up this high pile of *Hansard* books and threw them across the Chamber at Willmott. He could not throw them that far, and they hit the *Hansard* reporter and landed on the heads of his colleagues in the row in front of him. He then swung out the door where Hon Alannah MacTiernan is now standing—I invite her into the Chamber if she would like to come in.

Hon Tom Stephens: That is a reversal; you normally chuck her out!

The PRESIDENT: Fred Lavery swung around and jumped over Hon Jim Garrigan, who was sitting where Hon Tom Stephens now sits, and he got his shoulder caught on the curtain when he was leaving through the door. Down came the curtain rail and the curtain, and the rail went smack across the door. He then disappeared. Poor old Sir Leslie Diver was President at the time, and he was aghast, wondering what was going on with the scattered books and the curtain lying across the floor near the door! About 10 minutes later, Fred came back and said. "I apologise, Mr President; I did my lolly."

Hon Jim Garrigan was a goldfields member, and he was one of the men to whom Hon Phil Lockyer referred: He was a rough diamond and had been a hardworking miner before coming to Parliament. He had very little formal education. He used to live at the Globe Hotel in Wellington Street when he came down to Perth, and he had a great desire to play cards. He had a lot of mates at the Globe Hotel who played poker with him. When he came into the Chamber when the bells rang to start proceedings, Hon George Brand and I would have a two shillings bet: We would look at the clock and bet whether Garrigan would stay in the Chamber for one minute or one and a half minutes after prayers. We got it down to such a fine measure. The minute the President finished saying prayers, Jim Garrigan was out the door like a flash so he could play cards. He did not make a lot of speeches, but he was marked off as present every day. My comments indicate to members some of the types of people in this Chamber in 1965.

When I came into the Chamber today, I mentioned that somebody had handed me a Standing Order No 72 urgency motion which, for the benefit of people not in this Chamber every day, is the motion that the present Opposition absolutely loves. It likes to use the procedure every day; it gives it an opportunity to raise matters of some urgent interest. The urgency has gone from many of those matters from time to time, but it uses the word very loosely.

An urgency motion was handed to me today. I had been told that there would not be one, and I thought, “What is new; we will have one”, and I did not bother reading it, but the Clerk said I had better read it, so I saw that it was signed by me and indicated that I was very disappointed that the standard of onions in Western Australia today was not as good as it was in 1965. Members have heard me say over the years that my maiden speech in this place was about onions. I do not even eat them because I do not like them! Why would I make my maiden speech on the Marketing of Onions Amendment Bill? I made it because in those days if a member did not stand up to seek the call when the President put the question—the Presidents then were not soft and lenient like me—that was the end of the debate; there was no mucking around.

At that time, Hon George Brand, who was one of five other members who came in on the same day as me, was supposed to take the call and speak on the Address-in-Reply, but when the President put the question, “All those in favour say aye, against say no”, George did not understand it so he did not stand up, and the Address-in-Reply was carried; but no-one had spoken other than the guy who had moved the motion, and the opportunity for new members to make their maiden speeches on the Address-in-Reply disappeared.

My opportunity to speak came—Hon Tom Helm will again criticise my shop stewardship—when I made my speech on onions. Members should bear in mind that the House did not sit until August after the election, and I commenced my speech on 6 October 1965 at one minute to 6.00 pm and I spoke until 6.15 pm. The speech was so good that the President did not leave the Chair at 6.00 pm, as members know I do meticulously, and I do not let Ministers keep us here one minute past 6.00 pm; so I broke the rules by speaking until 6.15 pm. That speech was about onions, and I do not have time to tell members the reason, but Hon Ron Thompson, the Labor member for South Province, as it was then called—it was Fremantle and Spearwood—got me into trouble, and I will tell members about that some time.

The late Herbie Burton was the House Controller. He ran this place like a sergeant major. Any member who misbehaved, walked the wrong way or did not wipe his feet on the mat when he came into the House was given a broadside. I learnt a lot from Herbie, particularly with regard to the operations of the Joint House Committee.

The Chief Hansard Reporter was Mr Chinnery. I had forgotten his first name. The present present Chief Hansard Reporter told me it was Wally. I think he must have used another name, because I do not remember him as Wally. The other interesting Hansard reporter was Jessie Bussola, who was the first and only, at that time, female Hansard reporter in the world, and we had her in Western Australia at that time. We now have bundles of female Hansard reporters, but she was the first. That was in 1965. She was here before then, because she was here when I came. She went on to become the first female Chief Hansard Reporter, and she was a great lady. There were lots of other Hansard reporters, but I cannot name them all.

The library—some members heard me the other night—was a shelf with some Zane Grey books and some copies of *Smith's Weekly*, and that sort of highfalutin literature. We did not have a library as such. We have now made, and are continuing to make, advances in that area.

I need to talk briefly about the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association because members would think that something was wrong with me if I did not. Whatever I was able to achieve with regard to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association I owe to all members, because without the initial support of this branch, I would not have had the confidence to stand for that very vigorous international election that was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, where there were five candidates from around the world and about 400 delegates from around the world voted. I was very pleased to win. Actually, it never occurred to me that I would not win, because I am a super optimist. However, I would not have been able to achieve that without the help of some members who were here then and their successors who are here now, because I received a lot of encouragement and support.

I must pay tribute to Hon Bill Stretch, who was Western Australia's delegate to that conference. Hon Bill Stretch had told me he would vote for me, so I knew I had one vote out of the 400-odd, but Hon Bill Stretch helped me when we got to Zimbabwe and made sure that I was given every opportunity to win. I thank him for that, and I have thanked him previously. My election to the position of Chairman enabled me to do things that I know each and every member would love to have the opportunity to do, because I know how all members think and operate. As Hon Norman Moore has mentioned, it allowed me to help these emerging democracies, these third world countries, not only to run an election that was free and fair for the first time in their history, but also to establish a system of post election seminars. People from all over the world were doing election monitoring. However, as soon as the election was over the monitors, including the commonwealth monitors, went home and left these people with a brand new Parliament of 200 to 300 members who had never set foot in the Parliament before. Of course, a year or two later there would be a coup because the system had broken down. I established a system of post election seminars. I took people from all over the Commonwealth who operated under the Westminster system, and we held seminars to give them a basic understanding of how a system of multiparty Parliaments should work. I repeat, every one of the members in this Chamber would have done the same thing, had they had the opportunity. I was the fortunate one in the position to do it.

Again, I was able to do it only because of the tolerance of this House during the many times I was not in the Chamber when the House was sitting. I know that never once did the Government or the Opposition take advantage of the fact that I, as President, was not here, because the President is not paired and there was one person short as a result of that. I have told people all over the world that I come from a Parliament which has incredible tolerance for and belief in the system of parliamentary democracy I was espousing, to the extent that the Parliament allowed me to be absent.

I want to mention briefly another point that Hon Norman Moore made; that is, I study every one of the members in this Chamber. I am no psychologist or psychiatrist, but while I have been in the Chair I have made a practice of trying to understand each and every member in this place so that I know the special matters in which they are interested. I know which member antagonises another member, and I know the interjections that are unacceptable to individual members but which some other members may not care about. Some members can interject on some members but another member will take exception to it. I have studied that over the years. That is the reason I wrote the name Don Cooley in my notes. Hon Don Cooley came to this Parliament for a short time, one six year term. I do not know whether any of the Labor Party members know him, but those who do will agree with me I am sure that he is a wonderful person. He was involved with the brewery union and gave me a book about it.

Don was volatile and if the name "BHP" were mentioned he would go berserk. Hon Gordon Masters was then Whip and sat in the seat now occupied by Hon Muriel Patterson, and Hon Don Cooley sat where Hon John Cowdell now sits. If Don Cooley spoke, for example, about cemeteries, horticulture or anything, Gordon Masters would call out "What about BHP?" It had nothing to do with the subject being debated but he would ask the question every time. Don Cooley would go totally berserk. He nearly beat Hon Tom Stephens in the race to be the first member to be thrown out by me. Don was not only Cooley by name, but also in a crisis he was cool by nature. The bells were being rung for a division on whether to suspend him, when he jumped to his feet and apologised for his outburst. That outburst was not initiated by him, but by Gordon Masters. As soon as Don Cooley stood to speak, I would not listen to him but would watch Gordon Masters every single second to stop him opening his mouth. I have done that over the years with all members. Some members, even when I call for order, think I am being terrible, and others ignore it. It has worked very well over the years.

Before I get to the present members of the staff and the other persons to whom I must pay tribute, I will say something about my travels in India, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands and the Pacific nations. I refer to the word "racism". Racism is something we must fight tenaciously. We must ensure that even though we may have some views on the way in which people act, behave and run their politics, we should never be critical of a person's ethnic background. I have been at meetings of between 50 and 100 people when I was the only white person present. I do not know the colour of the people to whom I speak. My friends do not have a colour, shape or accent. They are all human beings with the right to be treated as such. I urge all members and people in Australia to be very careful of the tendency they may have to go down this path, which seems to be gathering momentum in this country, to ensure we do not allow ourselves to be labelled as racist.

I have similar feelings about people's political views. When I speak to people in this place and around the world I do not think about their political party or their political views. It does not occur to me to think about it. If many more members behaved like that, there would perhaps be fewer rowdier times. Even if there are rowdy times, it is far better for members to yell at each other than to shoot each other. I have been to countries where that occurs. Tolerance of people's race is no different to me from being tolerant of their political views. Every one of us has the same objective; that is, to do the best we can on the basis of our beliefs for the people who elect us and whom we represent.

I must spend one or two minutes talking about the current people. I want to compliment and thank many people with whom I have had contact over the years. Somebody has already said some nice words this morning about our Clerk of the House, Laurie Marquet. Two people saying something nice about him in one day is probably a bit difficult for

him to cope with! He is the Clerk because I appointed him, not without some controversy at the time and not without great disappointment in the eyes of some people. However, I appointed him for no other reason than that I had seen over the years that we needed in our Parliament somebody who had legal expertise and knowledge of parliamentary law. The days of becoming the Clerk simply because one had worked here longer than anyone else—I am not suggesting that was necessarily the case—were gone. I believed that members of Parliament were entitled to have access to somebody to advise them who had the depth of legal expertise of Laurie Marquet. He did not stop at giving his advice to the members; he actually started giving it to me! I thank Laurie. We have not always agreed, but we have been very good friends and have worked well together. Even when he disagreed with me about something I asked him to do, he dedicatedly prepared for me the views I had in words that members could understand. I will be eternally grateful for what he has done for me and, more importantly, for what he has done for this Parliament.

Ian Allnutt came a little while after I did. I should not have interjected earlier when I said that he had not started shaving when he came here. However, looking at him today, he still does not shave! Ian has worked in a variety of jobs over the years. He had a stint in the Legislative Assembly but he scurried back here pretty quickly. He did not suffer that mistake for long. I was pleased recently to appoint Stuart Kay to a brand new position. Again, it is part of my vision that members from now on have the expertise which a qualified person such as Stuart is able to bring to this Parliament. I will keep my eye on Stuart. There is an old saying that the corridors of this Parliament are strewn with the corpses of people who have let me down; I do not want him to be one of them!

I thank very much Neil Burrell, Vince Pacecca, Ken Foster and Bruce Bott, all of whom are the heads of the various departments in Parliament House at the moment. My great encouragement goes to each of those people to carry on the work they have been doing for the members of this Parliament during their time here. Each of the other staff in the Legislative Council, of whom we have had many over the years, has his or her job to do. Each is a very important link in this chain of activity. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. We have been able to put together in this place over all these years a chain containing no weak links.

I thank the catering staff, the people who make sure we have cups of tea etcetera when we need them. I have always said that the Hansard reporters have turned my speeches into pretty good speeches. I read some of them recently and I did not think I knew anything about the subjects. I obviously have a crook memory. I hope they do justice to this one, so that it reads decently.

I turn to my personal staff over the years. I have already mentioned Norma Turton and Bernice Downe, who were everybody's staff in those days. I thank Gay Iriks, my secretary; David Lloyd, my personal assistant; Jan O'Neill, who is in my electorate office, for what they have continued to do for me. I have news for them all—they will be doing it for quite a few weeks yet.

Finally, I mention Rosalyn King, who came to work for me a number of years ago; first in my electorate office and then in here. Many people criticised Brian Burke and I was one of them. However, the one thing he did was recognise that the Presiding Officers were in an invidious position if they did their job correctly. Members of Parliament represent people; they are endorsed by a political party. They are judged by their political parties by the number of times they can get outrageous stories on the front page of the newspaper criticising their opponents. If they do that every day, the party thinks they are working hard and are good at their work. However, Brian Burke understood that the President—and I guess the Speaker—was in an invidious position. He said to me that he would give me the funds to employ someone as my personal assistant who could do some public relations for the President provided I did not say nasty things about Brian Burke. Rosalyn King took on that job and she did a very good job for a number of years. However, Laurie Marquet could see that she had some ability so he offered her another job with more money and more permanency. As members know, anyone who works for me goes when I go. Ros took a job with the Legislative Council and now looks after the money. I tell her that she is tougher than Paul Keating about any financial claims I make. Nothing I claim qualifies for reimbursement; it is always “outside the guidelines”. I thank Ros King; she does a good job.

Finally, I come to the members. I thank the Leader of the House for his very nice words. Each of his ministerial colleagues has been good to work with. His predecessor, Hon George Cash, is a great personal friend of mine and a person whom I was delighted to support when he came into the House and we elected him as our leader. I thank each of my other colleagues, whom I will not list, for their continued support and encouragement for the work I do. Each of the members who is leaving—Hon Doug Wenn, Hon Sam Piantadosi, Hon Val Ferguson, Hon Graham Edwards, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, Hon Philip Lockyer and Hon Iain McLean—has played a very important part in the history of Western Australia. Each has done his or her best to ensure that the laws of this State conform with the desires of the community, and I commend them for the contribution they have each made. I hope that they have success in their retirement or new activities. I am honoured to have had the opportunity of serving with them.

I have never had any problems with Hon Kim Chance, the Leader of the Opposition, and his colleagues. I mentioned facetiously the other day that the newspapers attributed Hon John Halden's demise to being too close to the President. I have always wanted everyone to be close to the President; that is how this place works. Anyone making that comment does not comprehend how this place works.

Hon Joe Berinson was a pretty tough Leader of the Government and a very tough member of the Labor Party. However, he came into my office and confided in me. He sought my advice and assistance in the absolute knowledge that there was no way in the world that I would divulge to anyone what he had said. That is what the President is there to do. Hon John Halden was no exception, because I offered him the same courtesy that I offered to Hon Graham Edwards and the other leaders. Hon Kim Chance has not been here very long, but he has made his mark in this Parliament and he will continue to do so. I feel very comfortable in the knowledge that people like him are on one side of the political scene in this parliamentary democracy.

My wife Norma is in the gallery. Equally important to me is my grandson Justin, who is also present. I am very proud of him. Finally, I thank each member for their friendship, support, tolerance, patience, forbearance and understanding, without which my task as President would have been impossible. I wish all of you and your families and friends a very happy festive season and every success in the year to come.

[Applause.]
