

LIQUOR LICENSING

190. Mr J.E. McGRATH to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: A supplementary, member for South Perth. You are a little bit slow on your feet.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: A bit of history. Why has the Premier backflipped—I was here in 2006—on his position of supporting jobs, when in 2006, in relation to Coles and Woolies liquor stores, the Premier said, and I quote —

I do not have the prejudice against those companies that some members have. They employ a lot of Australians and are largely Australian owned and provide a good product and good service. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions —

The SPEAKER: Member, this is not a speech. Quick. Can you get to the point.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: It is a quote.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: And a very good quote. I remember what the now Premier said. He said that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Australians, directly or indirectly —

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Mr Speaker, a supplementary question needs to be succinct. It should not include quotes.

The SPEAKER: Member, can you get to the question very quickly, please.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.E. McGRATH: The now Premier ended his comments by saying that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Australians, directly or indirectly, have their savings tied up in Coles and Woolies.

The SPEAKER: Member, you are the only person in this house who could have got away with that.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I was unaware of the amazing research capacity of the member for South Perth. He is quite the academic.

I do endorse the fact that Coles and Woolies employ a great many Western Australians and a great many Australians, and a lot of people enjoy shopping at Coles and Woolies. That is true. In the days when the liquor bill was going through the house in 2005 and 2006, there was not the huge preponderance of massive liquor barns. We need to remember that is 12 years ago. It was not like it is now. There are about 600 or 700 small liquor stores around Western Australia. I want them to remain in business. It is a bit like pharmacies, which sell a regulated product. The general view of at least the Labor Party in Australia—maybe the Liberal Party, or perhaps not in light of recent comments—is that we want family-owned pharmacies to continue. Pharmacies are a regulated business. We do not want Coles and Woolies to take over that area of business in this country. Liquor is a regulated product, in a similar way —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Honestly! He is embarrassing. When are you going to get rid of him? I mean, please, put him out of his misery!

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Honestly! The opposition is so embarrassing. I am trying to give a reasoned answer to the question it has posed. Look at pharmacies. I will explain the way pharmacies work in this country. We do not allow Coles and Woolies to get into that business. In the case of liquor, which is a regulated product, we have taken the view that perhaps enough is enough in the proliferation of liquor barns, and that maybe the 600, 700 or 800 families around this state that rely upon those little businesses should have the opportunity to survive.