

ROAD SAFETY, DEMERIT POINTS

296. Mr MURRAY to the Minister for Police:

Will the minister inform the House about the double or nothing system for demerit points?

Mrs ROBERTS replied:

Mr Speaker -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has not even started her response and people on my left are interjecting on what they think she might say.

Mrs ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Collie for the question and for some notice of the question. It is disappointing that this innovative idea had a long history of being swept under the carpet by the previous Government. That Government sat on its hands and did not address road safety. The idea is very simple. A driver who collects 12 or more demerit points over three years can go on a good behaviour bond for 12 months and not lose his licence. If the driver loses two demerit points during that time his licence will be suspended for six months rather than the standard three months.

Several members interjected.

Mrs ROBERTS: I am prepared to take intelligent interjections but the interjections from the leader of the National Party are inane and incessant.

Mr Trenorden: What about the police officers in Avon?

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the National Party.

Mrs ROBERTS: This initiative is a wake-up call for drivers who accumulate too many demerit points. They can keep their licence and be provided with a significant incentive to mend their ways. It is about encouraging good driver behaviour and is an effort to get people to change their driving habits. This scheme has the endorsement of both the Road Safety Council and the Royal Automobile Club of WA.

Mrs Hodson-Thomas: What about the Minister for Planning?

Mrs ROBERTS: This is a very serious issue. People sitting opposite did practically nothing for road safety during its eight-year term. This Government has moved ahead with new initiatives. This has been recognised by people across the board.

Mr Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs ROBERTS: People such as Dick Stott from the RAC said on radio only yesterday -

... at least we've got a Cabinet now that does appear to be interested in innovative solutions to road safety problems.

That was followed up by Grant Dorrington, Chairman of the Road Safety Council, saying -

I'm most impressed with the way Cabinet, and Michelle, are working.

Several members interjected.

Mrs ROBERTS: I thank members opposite for that recognition. That makes it twice this week from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Barnett: You are headed for the health minister's portfolio.

Mrs ROBERTS: As the Opposition applauded, I will read the rest of the quote -

They seem prepared to have a go at taking some of these initiatives, positive ones, running with it, and I think we do need to do a little bit of that, as Dick said, with the road safety.

This double demerit proposal has been around since about 1995. For all those years, the previous Government sat on its hands and did nothing. Finally, we have a Government that is prepared to do something for road safety.