

NEW SCIENCE PROGRAMS

38. Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH to the Premier:

What new science programs have been initiated by the State Government?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

As members know, this is National Science Week; a time in which we can celebrate and promote science in our community. I am pleased that the Government has announced a number of initiatives in recent weeks.

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Warren-Blackwood to order for the first time. Members cannot interject constantly to interrupt question time. I warn members from both sides of the House that there is some leeway, as I have said many times, given to questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader the National Party. If members do not hold these positions, they should not put in their two bob's worth.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: A couple of weeks ago the Government announced that it would pay the higher education contribution scheme fees for university graduates who teach physics and chemistry in schools. There is a big shortage of physics and chemistry teachers and the Science Teachers Association of Western Australia has welcomed the move as a real effort to ensure that the system gets the teachers it needs. This move was applauded by Adam Spencer and Dr Karl Kruszelnicki in their Australian Broadcasting Corporation presentation at Penrhos College on Friday night.

The Government has also announced the introduction of two new science awards. The first is an inaugural prize for achievement in science to honour outstanding achievements in scientific research and leadership. We want our scientists to be recognised for the role they play in the community. The second prize is an award for young scientific researchers under the age of 35.

Last night, I had the pleasure to announce the introduction of a new fellowship program. Two fellowships, each worth \$1 million over four years, will bring good scientists from overseas or interstate to Western Australia to create a hub around some of our major research centres. This will have a multiplier-effect in terms of the intellectual contribution and economic spin-off, which is all good news for science in Western Australia.

Today, the Government announced a significant achievement by TAFE in Western Australia to gain the \$50 million contract to supply training to the Persian Gulf State of Qatar. This is a significant achievement. On this side of the House we recognise the role played by the member for Murdoch in his visit to that area in 2000 and the foundations that he laid for the contract. We were only too happy to continue on with that good work to create this development. We, on this side of the House, do not mind acknowledging the achievements of the now Opposition when it was in government. However, is it not interesting that the current Government can acknowledge the work of the now Opposition when it was in government but the Leader of the Opposition has a difficulty with this. I draw members' attention to the page on the web site of the Leader of the Opposition that deals with the liquefied natural gas contract with China. This is what it says -

An opposition member interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: We have Casanova, over there. Gee whiz! I think I will leave that one!

I quote from the web site of the Leader of the Opposition talking about his former leader -

The former Liberal Government began the LNG supply contract -

Point of Order

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I raise the issue of relevance. The Premier's statement has nothing to do with the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warren-Blackwood is quite accurate about the standing orders in relation to relevance. The answer must be relevant to the question. I am sure the Premier will bring his answer to an end in the near future.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr G.I. GALLOP: It is interesting to read the web site of the Leader of the Opposition. It states -

The former Liberal Government began the LNG supply contract process, including two trips to China by former Resources Minister Colin Barnett, and another by former Premier Richard Court.

So poor old Richard Court only went to China once, according to the Leader of the Opposition! He gets a footnote in the way that the Leader of the Opposition describes these events. The truth is that the former Premier went to China five times to lay the foundation for this project, and it was as a result of his personal interest in it that I made the point, when the Government announced this successful contract, of saying that the former Premier had played a significant role. Here we see the Leader of the Opposition so caught up in his own version of history that he does not even have the good grace to applaud the efforts of his former leader. That reflects very poorly on the Leader of the Opposition.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Premier has sought to impugn my reputation. I will not react to that -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, when a point of order is being made, it is usually the case that the House should be able to hear the point of order. I ask members not to interject to the point where I cannot hear the point of order.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Premier sought to reflect adversely on me, implying that I was less than gracious in acknowledging the achievement of former Premier Richard Court. I refer the House to my press release, in which I made the very clear point that the former Premier opened the political doors in China, and I congratulated him privately and publicly.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed