

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

15 OCTOBER 2009

POLICE AUXILIARY OFFICERS

808. Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Police:

I am proud to be part of a government that has a solid commitment to the Western Australia Police. However, there has been a lot of concern among my constituents in Riverton about the Labor Party's refusal to support the concept of auxiliary police officers. Can the minister clarify to the house the purpose of these officers, and why they are vital for a more effective police force?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

What a very good question from the member for Riverton. I share his concerns, and those of his constituents. I have been trying to fathom out the rationale and the logical thinking of the Labor Party, and there is none. When the Labor Party opposed the auxiliary police officer legislation that went through this house it showed quite clearly that it opposes the creation of 150 jobs. The Labor Party wants that done in five years' time, but we want to create those jobs today.

I want to make quite clear the logic behind this legislation. We want to make available 150 jobs for police auxiliary officers. As we speak, we are recruiting police officers through the academy who will be fully trained and fully sworn. We are also recruiting public servants to take over some of the clerical and administration work. We are trying on all three fronts to ensure that we keep up the job market in Western Australia. We will have fully sworn and fully trained police officers and extra public servants to do some of the clerical work, but we also want to create 150 jobs, as soon as this legislation passes through Parliament, for police auxiliary officers. I ask members to think about this clearly. By opposing this bill, members opposite oppose these jobs being created for 150 Western Australians. Some of the comments they made about those people are disgraceful and derogatory, and they will live to regret them. I will remind members opposite of the comments they made, and their descriptions of these people, when they are filling this very important role. We are creating 150 jobs. We are also still creating jobs because of the number of police cadets who go through the academy, and we are creating jobs for public servants to assist the police.

By opposing this bill, the opposition is not adding to the security and safety of Western Australians. In fact, the opposition is jeopardising that safety and security, because when we take on the 150 auxiliary police officers, they will be taking over the roles of fully trained, fully sworn officers who can come back from doing those duties and into front-line duties. There will be 150 police officers back on the streets where the public wants them. However, the stand of the Labor Party would negate all of that. I have never known a Labor Party in my life that voted against the creation of jobs, and wanted to defer it for five years. Members opposite should be ashamed of themselves. Where is their logic? There is none. Where is their clear thinking? There is none. Where is their integrity? There is none. The Labor Party does not keep its promises; it is not good for the people of Western Australia and, when it comes to public safety, members opposite should be ashamed of themselves. I hope their colleagues in the other place show a bit more common sense and logic than the members in this house did.

<028> R/4