

HANSARD 19 OCTOBER 2011

POLICE OFFICERS — NUMBERS

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

In light of this government's focus on improving public safety, can the minister inform the house of the latest increase in WA Police numbers and outline how these extra officers will benefit community safety in Western Australia?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

I thank the member for his question and his genuine concern. Obviously there seems to be a theme today of what the Liberal–National government is doing about law and order—I think it is a great theme—and the commitment that we have to law and order. Today I attended a police graduation ceremony, which was the first one for decades that consisted of three squads.

Very often there are two or just one, but today there were three squads, which consisted of 89 individual, newly sworn-in police officers. That is a fantastic effort. Sixty-four officers were men and 25 were women. They come from a wide range of countries, including Croatia, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Yugoslavia.

We truly have an international group of new police officers and the languages that they can speak. Obviously the opposition do not like it because we have more police officers than we have ever had in Western Australia today. We have a tiny fraction under 6 000 police officers in Western Australia. That is an achievement that I think should be applauded, because that is the commitment that this government has put into policing.

A member interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: There are quite a few. Seven of those recruits have service history in Australian defence forces. Three of the recruits have previous policing experience. One recruit served in the Royal Irish Rangers, and one recruit served in the Swiss defence force. They really have a variety of talents. All 89 of those graduates completed an intensive and rigorous 28-week training course at the Police Academy. They will begin their careers at various stations in both country and metropolitan areas.

During the past 12 months, Western Australia police have undertaken a successful recruiting and training program to ensure maximum deployment of police during CHOGM. One hundred and fifty officers have been recruited ahead of schedule for what will be the single largest police operation in the history of WA. There will be more officers on the front line next month than ever before. As I have said, after CHOGM there will be just a fraction under 6 000. They will benefit the community of WA in so many ways.

I recently spoke with the Commissioner of Police about the extra police that have been recruited for CHOGM. They will be used to bolster sections in WA Police that deal with out-of-control parties and antisocial behaviour around entertainment precincts. The commissioner indicated to me that he is very supportive of this idea. Post-CHOGM, 20 of those officers will be deployed to bolster the numbers in the regional operations group to target antisocial behaviour and riotous parties. Another 40 officers across the agency will be allocated to metropolitan and regional areas as well as specialist police units. These officers will target areas such as burglaries and motor vehicle thefts, which will assist the Liberal–National government in bringing down the crime rate even further than we have in our first three years of government compared to eight years of the disastrous previous government.