



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Canning Electorate: By-election

SPEECH

Thursday, 17 September 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Irons, Steve, MP

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Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:56): There are two days to go until the Canning by-election in my home state of Western Australia, and all of the pressure is on the WA branch of the Labor Party following their worst performance on record at the last by-election held in Western Australia, in 2014, which led to WA Labor being branded a national disgrace by Labor figures in the east.

There must be a by-election on, because we suddenly have a flurry of speeches and motions on or about WA from the opposition, who we never normally hear from. On Monday, I was scheduled to speak on one such motion put forward by the member for Perth on the WA economy but, unfortunately, the member for Grayndler, who is not even from WA, used up all of the allotted time for the debate and denied a Western Australian member a say. It reminded me of 2009 when, at 4.24 in the morning, the member for Lilly cut the debate off on the global financial crisis just as I was about to speak. For those members who have not been up at 4.24 in the morning, that was under the Rudd well-controlled and well-managed era.

The opposition leader, at that time, then warned that the nation's finances would be ruined if the Rudd government proceeded with the \$900 cheques and the school halls. History has certainly proven him right. There is a bit of *deja vu* with the motion and the member for Perth. It certainly takes me back to that earlier time in 2014 at the other election. The loss of the Senate ballots, cast at the federal election recount, forced the people of WA back to the polls to elect six new senators, and Labor saw this as their big chance in the West.

At the time, we had motion after motion from the Labor Party and the member for Perth on WA matters. It was the member for Perth, back then, who was asked to spearhead the activity for the opposition, but I think it was a task she found difficult as Labor had gone years without showing much interest in WA at all. There was also the legacy of the disastrous mining tax to deal with, which is still remembered by voters in the West and almost caused a wipe-out of WA Labor MPs in 2010. All of a sudden, back in early 2014, we had weeks of questions, motions and MPIs on Western Australia from the opposition, as we have seen this week as well.

It was great because it provided an opportunity to talk about all the good things going on in Western Australia, and an opportunity to call out the member for Perth on her record and misplaced priorities, such as pushing a South Perth train station no one wants, instead of a Manning Road on-ramp, in my electorate of Swan, which everyone wants. I know my Liberal colleagues from WA were also keen to call out Labor on their record in WA. In the end, the strategy backfired on Labor because, after all their motions, they won just one of the six Senate spots in WA, at that election: I think their lowest vote on record. I remember at the time Labor figures from the east shaking their heads and calling the WA branch of the Labor Party a national embarrassment.

Since the Senate election, we have heard almost nothing constructive from Labor about Western Australia. The only position they have taken in that time is to oppose a major road investment in WA to appease the Greens, which is an echo of Labor's opposition to road projects in other states. Since the Senate election, there have been no motions or MPIs about WA that I can recall. For Labor, it was back to their status quo of ignoring the west and putting it in the too-hard basket.

On Saturday we will have the by-election in WA, in the seat of Canning, and—hey presto!—suddenly we have had all these motions appearing out of thin air. I say to the Labor Party: if you repeat the same tactics, you should expect the same result. You cannot just go and switch it on and expect the people of WA to buy it. It is not good enough to only talk about WA when by-elections are on. As Liberals, we talk about WA week in and week out in this place. Our WA members are proud to be from WA and happy to talk about WA and its people.

I will now turn to the content of the member for Perth's motion. It is amazing that the member never finds anything positive to say about WA, because it is a place that is really transforming at the moment, with cranes in the sky everywhere you look around and lots of building and major infrastructure projects happening in our state.

Sunday was a momentous day in Perth's infrastructure development, with the Prime Minister, the Premier and I officially opening the Grand Gateway component of Gateway WA, some four months ahead of schedule. Roads that opened on Sunday included Airport Drive to Leach Highway westbound and the final section of the Tonkin Highway-Leach Highway interchange, which is the main interchange for Gateway WA.

On Saturday, as I said, we will go to the polls in the by-election for Canning, where my good friend and colleague Don Randall held the seat until he passed away. I know that Don would be out there doorknocking if he possibly could, but his spirit will be with Andrew Hastie, our candidate. I would like to congratulate Andrew Hastie and remind the people of Canning that Labor has failed on jobs and the economy time and time again. Who will put the interests of WA people first? The answer is the coalition every time.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:01