



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Science Curriculum

SPEECH

Monday, 23 May 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Mr SIDEBOTTOM

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(Braddon) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (19:46): Like everyone else in this place, I am very supportive of those that inspire and teach science and for those scientists who go about their profession which is absolutely essential to our world. It just reminds me of a statement some time ago that young people are inspired more by those who give to the world than by those who take from it. Science, through experiment, observation and analysis, looks at new solutions, new techniques and new opportunities to further humanity's goals. I think it was Isidor Rabi, the Nobel prize winner for physics, who said in 1944, 'Science is a great game where the playing field is the universe itself.' I think that is fantastic, and the great achievement of humanity is indeed science and is the definition of its promise.

Like many in this place on both sides and particularly you, Mr Deputy Speaker Adams, from the excellent electorate of Lyons, I have had the privilege of opening science centres funded by this government, science centres that would not have been funded under the former government or any other government for that matter and certainly not by many of our state government colleagues. Reece High School, Devonport High School, Penguin High School, St Brendan Shaw and the Circular Head Christian School and the Marist Regional College are but some of them. To see their eyes light up as they would with a test tube going into their brand-new laboratories brought back terrible memories of my science classes where everyone rushed in to turn the gas on in order to eliminate their colleagues, their enemies and even their friends.

I want to congratulate the government for its record on the funding of science and its support for science itself. There is no enough, there will not be enough, we have got to have more. I have already written to the minister complaining about a few programs that I think we could spur on a little bit more. The previous speaker was mentioning some of these programs, but the important thing we have got to remember about those programs is that they were discrete programs fully funded by the Commonwealth in conjunction with the states, and we expect the states not to handball this but to do their bit and to continue these science programs as the agreement stipulated. What is fantastic is that a lot of this material now is on the internet, is

available to all schools, is available to science teachers, is available to parents and indeed is available to the community. Those programs are ready to be rolled out and updated, as was part of the program. So I congratulate the government on the funding of those science programs. I also congratulate the government on its attempts to support professional development of teachers and particularly in the development of science and of the science curriculum.

Tasmania is renowned for lots of excellent things and just one more to add to it is that it is the home of the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education, PICSE, led by the University of Tasmania. I was really happy to see that it was Dr David Russell, who was a colleague of mine at the Cradle Coast campus of Don College, who initiated this program which is now nationwide. What it does essentially is it supports science teachers to encourage their students to go and have scientific experiences with primary industries, to keep people interested in the most dynamic industries in Australia—the primary industries. This program is now nationwide and has a tremendous reach. Information has been presented to something like 44,000 students in over 2,000 year 11 and 12 science classes. It has informed year 11 and 12 students about study and career opportunities in the sciences and particularly in selected primary industries to demonstrate the relevance of science. It has supported 3,336 secondary school students and their teachers in the participation of science investigation awards, just to name some of what has now grown into a \$12 million value-added program in the sciences. Congratulations to Dr David Russell and his team, which has now spread throughout Tasmania, and to PICSE, a world leader.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams): Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

(Lyons) (NaN.NaN pm)