DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT — ADVERTISING REVENUE

329.   Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the economic audit requirement announced 12 months ago for the Department of Transport to raise $5 million from increased advertising.

(1)   Will the minister please detail precisely how the department intends to raise this additional revenue and how much will be raised from each activity?

(2)   Does the government still intend billboards to be one of the activities; and, if yes, can the minister advise the location and size of any billboard sites that will be developed to meet this requirement?

(3)   If no to (1) and (2), why not?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. Hon Ken Travers has been far more active in this area than I have.

Hon Ken Travers: Exactly; it's not hard.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: He has produced some results. As reported in the *Fremantle Herald* and possibly other esteemed publications, apparently what is on my agenda is some massive advertising billboards for Fremantle's iconic fishing boat harbour and a whole range of other places, including possibly up and down the Swan River. I am looking here at the *Fremantle Herald.* Hon Ken Travers got a page 1 apparently, headed "Billboard blight" in the *Fremantle Herald* of 22 May, a publication of record, no doubt, that is keen to pick up on any —

Hon Ken Travers: It recorded your opposition to Roe Highway 8 about eight years ago.

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Sorry; were you squawking at me then?

Hon Sue Ellery: I don't squawk; and don't be so rude.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the minister addresses the answer through the Chair, I will not interject and nobody else should either.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That esteemed publication carried an image that I understand was not done by the *Herald*; it was created by Hon Ken Travers' office, and a comment was made of it at the time. It is a picture of some quite staggeringly enormous billboards completely blotting out the landscape in a waterfront area. How very creative of Hon Ken Travers and his staff! The suggestion that billboards will dot the Swan River foreshore or blot out Hillarys Boat Harbour is quite ridiculous. If the opposition spent a little more time developing some credible transport policies rather than engaging in this type of scaremongering —

Hon Ken Travers: If you don't answer the questions I ask you, I will continue to scaremonger.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: — their electorates might consider them a better alternative to the Greens the next time there is an election.

(1)–(3) In relation to the question that has been asked, as Minister for Transport I am not responsible for the activities of the Economic Audit Committee, so I suggest the member direct his question —

Hon Ken Travers: Your department has to implement it; tell us how you will do it?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: He does get hysterical, does he not? What is it about him? The member perhaps needs to refer his question to the appropriate area. Insofar as he asked a question that touches on the activities of the Department of Transport, the department will be looking at some passive ways of generating revenue; that is, revenue generation that does not impact adversely on people. To do that, some advertising might be permitted to be sent out with government notices. Although that would be on a fairly restricted basis I think. Also, there could be some minor advertising on some department-controlled properties. But I am sure local government and others who have a say in advertising matters would also have a role to play in that. Are we intending to blot out the landscape with giant billboards in waterfront areas?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You are!

Hon Ken Travers: It is your government's documents that talked about billboards, not me!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Different government committees and whatever that make suggestions can make all the suggestions that they want, and they can be investigated —

Hon Ken Travers: It was in the budget papers last year, you goose!

Point of Order

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN: Mr President, once again we are descending into abuse to a certain degree, which seems to be stock-in-trade for the opposition.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! A point of order has been raised. I have said before that it is sometimes not so much the words that are used but the intent with which the words are used. Members will be aware that some words can be interpreted in different ways. So I would ask members to be cognisant of that. I am sure the minister is coming to the end of his answer.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I had barely started, Mr President. Just for the record, I do not take issue with what Hon Ken Travers was saying.

Hon Ken Travers: You accused the Leader of the Opposition of squawking!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Well, she does squawk from time to time. If Hon Ken Travers wants to start calling me names, I am just saying I am not worried about it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Look, now we are getting to the point where there is obviously personal intent in the terms used, whether it is "goose" or "squawking". Minister, have you finished your answer?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, I have pretty well finished the response to the honourable member.

Hon Ken Travers: It's not an answer!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Well, it does not merit any more of an answer than that. The member is engaged in a false —

Hon Ken Travers: It is in your budget papers and your previous answers to this house! That is what I am basing it on!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I would like to bring my answer to a close. The member may not like the answer, but if he wants to ask the question, he is going to hear the answer. The answer is that he is committing a fraud when he puts out or his office puts out ludicrous photo-shop pictures of the sort that he has put out recently—before he has even asked me this question. I can tell members that they are not going to see this sort of wholesale visual pollution. It is not on my agenda and it is not on the government's agenda—finished!