

ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL PROTECTION BILL

574. Mr R.H. COOK to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Of course, if the minister had bothered to listen to the rest of the program, he would have heard other distressed callers talking about deaths as a result of the virus.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr R.H. COOK: If I promised to ensure that the minister is not savaged by our back bench, would he go ahead and continue to debate the Royal Perth Hospital Protection Bill and keep his promise to the people of Western Australia?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

That is an excellent suggestion! If the opposition will commit to take off all those silly amendments, so that —

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The opposition will not do it. We are happy to debate Royal Perth Hospital any day of the week. We will debate the legislation on Royal Perth Hospital as soon as we come back, if members opposite take off all their amendments that relate to other hospitals. The alternative is that if members opposite still want to debate —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members! I think that the member for Kwinana has a genuine interest in the answer being given, but a lot of members in this place are preventing that answer from being given to the member for Kwinana.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I am almost finished. I wanted to say that if members opposite also want to debate those other hospitals, we are more than happy to do that. Each individual member for that region can move them as separate motions —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member, you might be dressed in Collingwood colours —

Mr P.B. Watson: I didn't notice!

The SPEAKER: Maybe that is another thing you did not notice, but I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I would like to get that legislation through; in fact, the Leader of the House and I discussed it just last week to see whether we could find a time to get it on —

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: — despite what we know is going to be a huge amount of —

Several members interjected.

MEMBER FOR CANNINGTON — COMMENTS OF 16 SEPTEMBER

2. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Attorney General:

My deadly serious question is to the Attorney General. On 16 September 2010, the member for Cannington made the following comments regarding the member for Wanneroo and other members in this place —

Members opposite have had their names expunged from the Corruption and Crime Commission's records.

...

The member for Wanneroo can explain himself, and other members can explain why they have had their names expunged from the CCC's records.

Given the seriousness of these comments, can the Attorney General explain to the house exactly what the member for Cannington has implied?

Point of Order

Mr W.J. Johnston: The member is quoting from an uncorrected *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Wanneroo asked a question that contained a direct quotation, which directly infringes standing order 77.

The SPEAKER: That is additional information.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Most of the questions coming from the opposition refer to quotes of the Premier and other ministers.

Questions without Notice Resumed

The SPEAKER: I direct the Attorney General to answer the question as asked.

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for his question. Those statements were brought to my attention by the member for Wanneroo. In fact, the statement that the member for Wanneroo brought to my attention was made by the member for Cannington on 16 September 2010 in the context of debate on the Police Amendment Bill. The member for Cannington stated —

The member for Wanneroo can explain himself, and other members can explain why they have had their names expunged from the CCC's records.

That is not the usual run of the mill adversarial theatre that we get in this place from time to time. That is a very specific and very serious allegation against —

Mr E.S. Ripper: You should have listened to the Premier's speeches when in opposition. That is very run of the mill compared with what he said!

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr C.C. PORTER: Everyone here professes to care about parliamentary standards, but I get shouted down when I want to speak about them.

This is a serious matter of parliamentary standards. That is a very specific allegation against the member for Wanneroo as an individual, and also against other members on this side of the house whom the member for Cannington was not bold enough to name. The phrase "expunged from the CCC's records" is not open to wide interpretation. That is a very specific allegation. "Expunge" has a clear and well-known meaning: to remove completely something unwarranted or unpleasant. And "records of the CCC" must only be a reference to reports, draft reports, recommendations or other statements of the CCC. Let us make no mistake about it: the allegation was that the member for Wanneroo has somehow managed to have his name removed from an unidentified CCC report or document, which would have otherwise presented an adverse finding against him. That is about as serious as allegations ever get in this place. The notable feature about that allegation is that it was offered with absolutely no substantiation or explanation whatsoever by the member for Cannington. Indeed, having looked over this and spoken with the member for Wanneroo, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see what it is even a vague reference to.

The member for Wanneroo kindly volunteered to me that it is the case that he was the subject of a complaint and an investigation with respect to a donation to his campaign for the 2007 mayoral campaign for the City of Wanneroo. As I understand the case, that was investigated by the Electoral Commission and the Department of Local Government, and a letter was sent to the member for Wanneroo saying that there were no adverse findings against him. I am not aware of any CCC investigation that has been conducted against the member —

Mr E.S. Ripper: If this is so serious let us suspend standing orders and debate it. Come on! Straight after question time, we will have a debate on it. We will take you on on this issue.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr C.C. PORTER: Insofar as I am aware, there has never been —

Mr E.S. Ripper: Have the courage to bring it on for debate; we'll take you on!

Mr C.C. PORTER: Insofar as I am aware, there has never been any CCC investigation or report on the member for Wanneroo. The closest we have to anything about the member for Wanneroo is the report on the investigation into alleged public sector misconduct at the City of Wanneroo. That involved some colourful characters—none of them being the member for Wanneroo.

Keeping in mind that if a thing like this was said outside this place, it may well amount to criminal defamation in breach of section 134 of the Criminal Code, I formed the view in respect to this question and to the asker of this question, that the allegation that the member for Wanneroo has somehow managed to have his name removed from an unidentified CCC report or document which would otherwise have represented an adverse report against

Extract from *Hansard*

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Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Christian Porter

him is so serious that the member for Cannington should take the opportunity, pursuant to section 148 of the standing orders, and either substantiate that claim or apologise for it.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Suspend standing orders and bring it on then! Right after question time, we'll do it!

Mr C.C. PORTER: We are offering the member for Cannington the opportunity to explain or withdraw. If that is not what he chooses to do, Mr Speaker, it may well be that the course that has suggested is the appropriate one.