

LIVE CATTLE TRANSPORT SHIP — *PEARL OF PARA*

542. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I understand that 5 240 cattle were aboard the *Pearl of Para*, which was anchored off Cockburn Sound because it had returned to Fremantle after mechanical difficulties.

- (1) Will the minister please inform the chamber of the current state of the cattle and whether the ship has been repaired and is on its way?
- (2) What is the intended duration of the voyage and how much longer will the cattle be at sea given the mechanical difficulties?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The *Pearl of Para* set sail on 4 September to Israel with 5 240 cattle on board—the member is correct. I understand that about three days out to sea a bearing gave way on the ship’s propeller shaft, so the captain decided to return to dock off Fremantle. Engineers have been on board and the repairs have been inspected. There is a full-time vet on board. The federal Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry has been involved and has been keeping the Department of Agriculture and Food fully informed.

I understand the ship will be ready to sail in the next couple of days. The voyage to Israel will take about 21 days and there is plenty of food and bedding, as they call it, for the cattle. It is about 90 per cent loaded, so there is plenty of room on board and they have plenty of ventilation, food and water. When the repairs to the ship are finished, it will take on extra food and water for the journey and sail on, hopefully, in the next couple of days.