

**EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE, TRIP TO CANADA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

*Statement by Member for Murdoch*

**MR M.F. BOARD** (Murdoch) [10.16 am]: I seek the indulgence of the House to inform members that representatives from the Education and Health Standing Committee will shortly travel to Canada and the United Kingdom to gather evidence for the inquiry into the role and interaction of health professionals in the Western Australian public health system. The investigative travel will be undertaken between Friday, 20 June and Sunday, 6 July 2003. The member for Geraldton and I will travel to Canada where we will meet with eight organisations in Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax. We will then travel to the United Kingdom where we will visit 15 organisations scattered around the country. We are very fortunate to have scheduled the trip to coincide with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference. The member for Southern River, who will attend the CPA conference in London, will join with the member for Geraldton and I for the UK leg of the trip. The organisations that we will meet have been identified through extensive background research as being at the forefront of innovative health practices.

The purpose of the trip is to consider the new solutions that Canada and the United Kingdom are trialling in the relationship between the public health system, in particular the secondary health system, and primary health care. Canada and the United Kingdom have had problems similar to those in Australia with people's access to general practitioners and its relationship to the crowding in public hospitals. A number of solutions have been trialled, some of which have already had outstanding success. Those areas that we will be considering are funded through the National Health Service in the United Kingdom and the Canadian health department. They are only at the trial stage at the moment, but if they prove to be the success that the early trials are indicating they will be, then there are strong opportunities for delivering similar systems in Western Australia. Currently, the Western Australian health system is under the same pressure as the health systems in those countries. It is interesting to note that the Minister for Health has asked Professor Michael Reid to come to Western Australia. I know that Professor Reid is also very keen on what is being trialled in Canada and the United Kingdom and I believe that our report will be of great benefit to the Parliament and to the Department of Health.

The committee trip is being done with bipartisan support through the Department of Health and the minister. Mike Daube, the head of the department, has offered additional assistance for us to make personal connections that may assist us in our inquiries. On our return, the committee will produce a report that will be tabled in the House.