

COMMITTEES, REVIEWS AND INQUIRIES, MINISTER FOR HEALTH

1130. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to question on notice No 1572, from the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier, the answer to which provides details of some 166 committees, reviews, inquiries and so on initiated by the Gallop Government in its first 15 months at a cost to the taxpayer of \$10 million, and ask -

- (1) Is the Minister for Health aware that he is the only minister who refused to be accountable to this Parliament, and to provide any information at all in answer to that question?
- (2) On what basis did the Minister for Health consider himself to be any different from the rest of his cabinet colleagues in refusing to provide an answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question despite having three months to do so?

Mr KUCERA replied:

- (1)-(2) This is an interesting question, dealing with the cost of reviews, committees and consultations, clearly set out by the Premier in his answer. The Department of Health was too busy to do these things, as was said in the letter. I looked today at a press release from the Leader of the Opposition in which he said that the only government minister who refused to provide this information was the Minister for Health, who responded that the question would take too much research. Putting money into health is about saving lives, not allowing the Opposition to engage in political ploys. The Leader of the Opposition's statement claimed that the Health Administrative Review Committee and the Drug Summit together cost about \$1 million.

About three weeks ago, my wife and I went to the Royal Perth Rehabilitation Hospital at Shenton Park and talked to the staff in ward 1. If anybody wants to know why every single possible dollar that I can screw out of the Treasury is important, they should pay a visit to that ward. We do not waste money on trivia in health, and we get on with the job. Members of the Opposition criticise the money we put into the Drug Summit. I saw a young man in ward 1 at Shenton Park, who for the rest of his life will be supported by this Government, or whatever Government comes after it. A massive heroin overdose has condemned that man to hospital for the rest of his life. I do not care how much money was spent on the Drug Summit. Every dollar was well spent. The Opposition comes in here with this kind of rubbish and talk about accountability. The Government is accountable in health, because it is getting on and fixing the problems.