

PUBLIC SECTOR — PERMANENT POSITIONS

538. Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Public Sector Management:

I have a supplementary question. Given this policy of giving permanency will work against every aspect of the machinery-of-government changes that the government brags about and its service priority review—that is, it will increase the cost of the public sector, increase the cost of —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I want to hear the supplementary question.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This will increase the cost of the public sector and the cost of redundancies and reduce the flexibility of the public sector, working against —

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Supplementary questions are very short.

The SPEAKER: That is right. Leader of the Opposition, can we have a succinct question, please.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This policy will work against every aspect of the machinery of government —

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGowan: Would the Leader of the Opposition like me to answer?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. Let me ask the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! We are near the end. I put in an extra question today because we had a bit of extra time, but I will not be doing so tomorrow.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: How does the government's policy of giving permanency to 13 000 public servants work with its machinery-of-government changes and service priority review, which are designed to achieve exactly the opposite—reduce the cost and improve the flexibility of government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thought if one public sector worker in Western Australia would be arguing for permanency, it would be the Leader of the Opposition!

Dr M.D. Nahan: You fired 3 000.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition had better think about what he is saying before he stands up and says it. Arguing for more insecure employment—I am not sure that is in his interest. I am not sure that he should be doing that. That is not what I would be doing. As I explained to the Leader of the Opposition, the commissioner's instruction that went out from the Public Sector Commission was very clear about funding being secured for these positions. I explained it to the Leader of the Opposition in my answer. I know that he does not listen to the answer because his supplementary questions reflect that every time. I know that he has difficulty listening, watching and reading things, but I was very clear in my initial answer about that. That is the position we have taken. Other governments have done it before. The reality is that it is only Liberal governments that do not.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.