

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AMALGAMATIONS — COST

10. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Treasurer:

I refer to the six-year local government forced amalgamation mess pursued by the Premier and supported by the Treasurer, which was supposed to save millions of dollars. As Treasurer, will the member for Riverton tell Parliament what the cost of this lengthy process has been to taxpayers?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

This was an exercise in trying to cajole the local government sector into reform. Most of the benefits were to accrue to local government and to ratepayers. The fact that we have stepped back here is a real hindrance to ratepayers. The individual councillors and managers of local governments will be held accountable by the ratepayers for their failure to participate.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: As the Premier —

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I call you to order for the first time. I will give you a supplementary question if you behave yourself.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: As the Premier and the minister indicated, we spent \$1.7 million in handouts to the sector. The Department of Local Government gave the sector all sorts of assistance, as it does now. The City of Canning was sacked for the second time in 20 years. It gave them a great deal of assistance, though the ratepayers will have to wear that bill.

From the Treasurer's perspective, local governments will be the losers and the budget will be the winner. We had \$60 million in the budget to help them merge and do other things. They will now lose that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Because of failing to participate in a process it insisted that we enter upon and that would have helped the ratepayers, the local government sector is now \$60 million out of pocket. Good luck.