

GERALDTON RACETRACK

516. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

The minister mentioned Geraldton and the fact that the trotting and racing codes had cooperated. I agree with that; races have been held throughout the region for a year. Is the minister confident that racing will be held once again at the Geraldton racetrack?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for his question. I know he is very concerned about the future of racing in Geraldton. A few weeks ago in Geraldton I had the pleasure of meeting members of the committee of the Geraldton Trotting Association and the committee of the Geraldton Turf Club. In the course of attending the Geraldton racetrack I had the opportunity of walking the full length of the straight, and so far as I can judge it is in very good condition. I had the benefit of advice from a couple of gentlemen who walked the straight with me. I was hoping that, rather than having to walk the full length of the straight, the person at the other end would pick me up halfway, but as it turned out he did not, so I had to walk the full length and I started to walk back again. I am very conscious of the needs of our health system and I did my best.

I am confident that the racetrack will operate very well. It is in great condition, the amenities are fantastic and I am looking forward to the start of the racing season in Geraldton commencing in October. My recollection is that there will be a trial race meeting in early October, moving into the full racing season later in October. The track is in as good a condition as I have seen a racetrack during my short tenure, and I have seen some very good racetracks around the State. Geraldton racetrack has a great future. The committee is enthusiastic. The community of Geraldton is looking forward to attending the race meeting and I understand that outside the confines of Geraldton the farming community is very interested in what is about to happen. I am confident it will be a fantastic occasion and I am looking forward to being at the Geraldton Cup in Geraldton in the forthcoming season. The member may recall that the Geraldton Cup was run this year at Ascot.

Hon M.J. Criddle: I was there. I did not back the winner.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: It was a fantastic race. I did back the winner, and the winner paid over \$20. It was a contested race and I am looking forward to a repeat performance.

I am conscious of the needs of members, particularly country members, to get back to their electorates and I therefore ask that the business of the House be resumed.