

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE**

**HON KIM CHANCE** (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [11.31 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

*Prison Nurses - Adjournment Debate*

**HON PETER FOSS** (East Metropolitan) [11.31 pm]: Today I received a request to speak to a number of prison nurses who were at the Parliament to complain about the treatment that they have received from the Government. I spoke to those nurses, and I became very concerned at the attitude that the Government is taking to this dispute. It was clear from talking to the nurses that they are not firebrands. For most of them their concern is that this is the first time they have ever been on strike. They find it extremely difficult to understand how the Department of Justice can appear to be refusing to implement a directive that has come from the Department for Consumer and Employment Protection. What they find particularly interesting is that the department has refused, apparently on the instruction of the minister, to agree to the matter being dealt with by consent arbitration. I do not believe in unions being able to dictate everything to government, nor do I believe in government being able to dictate everything to unions. I can understand that from time to time Governments find themselves unable to agree to things to which an individual employer may be able to agree. However, I do not understand the refusal by the Government to even talk with the nurses, and, more importantly, to have the matter arbitrated. The result is that the nurses are on strike and are not being paid. In the meantime, the nursing services are being in small measure provided through the use of agency nurses, at a cost far in excess of what would be paid to these nurses if they were to be paid their agreed increased salary; and, if the dispute were to go for any length of time, at a cost that would certainly absorb the back payment that is in dispute.

I regret what is happening in the Department of Justice. As I mentioned the other day, it is distressing that there is an enormous drop in morale in the department. The reduced number of prisoners has not led to a catching up on those things that were almost impossible to do when the number of prisoners was enormous, such as the education of prisoners and officers. People who are part of the T3 program and who intend to expand that program enormously have been given separation. Senior officers of many years experience are leaving through sheer disgust at the way in which the system is being neglected. The amount of sick leave and industrial disputation has increased. I find it extraordinary that a Labor Government seems to be taking this outrageously obdurate attitude to its employees. These employees are utterly puzzled as to why a Labor Government is doing this to them when there was quite a good rapport between the minister and the department when there was a Liberal Government. It is not a matter of principle, rights or anything else. It is a matter of good management. The refusal of the Attorney General to allow this matter to be arbitrated is extraordinary. I urge the minister to do something positive for the morale of the justice system, and particularly for these nurses, who I believe are involved in this dispute reluctantly, and to allow this matter to be decided in a way other than the current unfortunate way in which it is being dealt with. When I was Minister for Justice we would go to arbitration on these matters. I hope this minister will also agree to go to arbitration, because it is time we started to deal properly with the justice system. We have just had the second reading of a Bill that will supposedly deal with how people are sentenced and dealt with in prison. The way in which this Government has depressed the conditions in jails, because of this minister's refusal to pay appropriate attention to this matter, has had a significant effect on both prisoners and prison officers.

*Maritime Museum - Adjournment Debate*

Hon PETER FOSS: I wish to raise one more matter. I notice that the Minister for Housing and Works has disappeared again. I rose to my feet thinking the minister would be here; hopefully he will return to the Chamber to deal with this matter. If I may be so painful, Mr President, I wish to raise again the question of the Maritime Museum. I had indicated to the minister that I had hoped he would give us a report on the opening of the museum, which unfortunately I did not make.

Hon Kim Chance: I have been there since your last speech. It is a wonderful place.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am sure a lot of people have been there. I had hoped that the minister, as one of those people who was privileged to go to the opening, might have told us something about the opening ceremony, because it is a significant matter. I had hoped also that the minister might explain the rather difficult remark that he made in response to the - I will not say interjection - remark by you, Mr President, that you had told the Premier that he had offered his position to me and I could represent him. I did hear Hon Tom Stephens interject to say, "I told you it was under direction." I thought the minister might explain to us whether in fact it was the Premier who was the spoilsport and had decided that I could not go along and represent him. It did sound a bit like that.

Hon Ken Travers: He invited the true architect of it along, so that was all right.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am glad the member thinks that. It does seem strange, though, that the Premier would intervene to prevent me from going. I had thought he might make amends by saying, "Even if you can't represent Hon Tom Stephens, perhaps you would like to come along anyway and see it." I did inquire about going down in the afternoon, but I understand it was so successful and the queues were so long that -

Hon Louise Pratt: I went there and could not get in because I did not have an official invitation.

Hon PETER FOSS: I was tempted to take up the very good advice of Hon Louise Pratt that I should just gatecrash and see whether anyone would stop me at the door. I suspect they might not have done.

Hon Ken Travers: If you were dressed as Andy Warhol again I am sure they would have recognised you!

Hon PETER FOSS: I did not think I should just go there and test the good nature of this Government, which may not exist at all! I do not know what the Government's attitude is to openings, because I have not had an invitation to any of the openings it has had. I do not know how it runs these things. However, it might very well have been that if I had gone up to the front door and walked in boldly I would have been welcomed with open arms and the Premier would have said, "I didn't want you to take over Hon Tom Stephens' position but I'm awfully pleased that you were able to make it today." However, I missed out on all those things. I asked Hon Tom Stephens earlier if he could give us a report so that some of us who did not get an invitation might get a feel even vicariously, and have on the record, for how well it went. It was obviously a great success. I have seen some good accounts of it in the paper. However, I felt that a bird's eye view and a first hand account from Hon Tom Stephens with his usual enthusiasm would be better than reading about it in the newspaper or looking at the photographs. Although I could not get the direct experience of what it was like to be there, I thought he might give us a little hint of how well it went. I am sure he could tell us about the wonderful show on Sunday that was put on to make sure the public enjoyed the opening of this magnificent building, which was completed shortly after we lost Government. The building has been, of course, fitted out by the current Government. I am sure that it has been fitted out magnificently and that it is a building of which we should be proud. I urge Hon Tom Stephens to make a ministerial statement, if he cannot spend the time to tell us about it during the adjournment debate, and give us a flavour of what it was like to be there and how magnificent an occasion it was.

Hon Jim Scott interjected.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am sure Hon Jim Scott, being a local member, would have received an invite.

Hon Jim Scott: No, I did not get one either, but I intend to talk about it in a minute.

Hon PETER FOSS: That is good. Hon Jim Scott should have got an invite.

*Ningaloo Reef Rally - Adjournment Debate*

**HON JIM SCOTT** (South Metropolitan) [11.41 pm]: That was a very opportunistic across-Chamber discussion with Hon Peter Foss, Mr President. I intend to tell the Chamber about the rally against the proposed resort at Ningaloo Reef that occurred in Fremantle at the same time as the opening of the new Western Australian Maritime Museum. Some 15 000 people attended that rally.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: It is going up. I thought it was 5 000.

Hon JIM SCOTT: No, there were a lot more than 5 000. The rally left the Esplanade Park, travelled up Essex Street, down South Terrace and then back down to Esplanade Park via High Street. As the crowd arrived back at Esplanade Park, the last remnants of people were leaving the Maritime Museum.

Hon Peter Foss: Are you sure it was not a queue to get into the museum?

Hon JIM SCOTT: I saw the queue to get into the museum but that queue was much smaller than the rally. The queue to get into the museum was big and, in fact, was added to when the rally was over because many people went from one function to the other, as I did, but I then gave up and left.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Peter Foss: Some people, in fact, went to both functions but gave up on the museum? It sounds as though the museum had a bigger queue than your rally.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Some people from the rally went on to the boat function afterwards; but for me the queue was too long.

I want to quote from the main speech that was given on that day by the author Tim Winton and then I will seek leave to table it because it very well summed up the concerns that people have about the proposed resort at Ningaloo. It states, in part -

Why are you here? Why give up your Sunday to stand here on the park with thousands of others? Because you've woken up to what's going on. You realize you're about to lose something precious. You care enough about your country, your land, your coast to stand up and be counted. And you're not stupid. You don't believe that the only way to protect our greatest inshore reef is to dig a filthy great hole beside it and build a white-shoe resort there.

Let's be straight about this: Ningaloo needs this resort as much as the Bungle Bungles need a casino.

On an empty beach where endangered turtles lay their eggs, one company wants to cut a hole for hundreds of luxury boats. Wants to line it with 300,000 tonnes of limestone mined from the wilderness nearby. Wants to put two and a half thousand people into a resort complex bigger than some towns. And that's only Stage 1. Beautiful one day. Queensland the next.

What's there now is a rugged and beautiful wilderness. People come from all over the world to see it. After all, how many places can you go to where you can swim with a whaleshark, a placid animal the size of a bus covered in brilliant dots like an Aboriginal painting. The same day you can be circled by manta rays that roll and swerve like enormous underwater birds. If you're lucky you'll see a dugong, the shy and vulnerable creature of the seagrass meadows. There'll be turtles, of course. I've seen them hatch and waddle down to the water with sky pink as the desert beyond. There'll be more coral than you've ever seen in your life. If you're keen enough you can see the coral spawn like a tropical blizzard. It's an incredible place. Somehow God or history or something has left it to us to experience, to look after, to pass on to our children and their children.

As you can see, I love the place. When you take people to see it they go home completely lit up. Because they've experienced one of the world's last great wild places. They've had a wilderness experience. Something that stays with them the rest of their life.

They don't usually go home complaining about the lack of a five star resort. They go home moved by a unique place. Resorts are not unique places. In fact they're hardly even places at all. They're like shopping malls. Seen one you've seen em all. They're bog standard, boring and ordinary. Honestly, do visitors to Perth remember Rotto and the Swan River or do they take home happy snaps of Garden City and Galleria?

He goes on to say -

So who exactly needs this resort? The Coral Coast Marina Development company. That's who. One company. That's what all the fuss is about. They say they're only doing it for the sake of the reef. Give me a break. Maybe they come from the Jerry McGuire school of environmentalism. Imagine that school motto: *Show me the money!* That's how green this proposal is.

...

Look, they're probably not terrible people, but they're yesterday's men with yesterday's ideas. Their pastel dream is a hangover from the 80's, the era of Bond and Skase. It's back to the 80's then, is it? You could almost feel sorry for them. Sure they've got spindoctors and lawyers and big P.R. muscle, but in the end they're all just doing it for a buck. I can't see much passion there. Not the kind you see in volunteers. That is, people working for principle alone. People who don't have a financial interest in the outcome. Money buys a lot but it doesn't buy what you people have, I'll tell you that. It doesn't buy guts, it doesn't buy spirit. It doesn't deliver a shared sense of the common good. And in the end it doesn't buy the truth.

In addition to Tim Winton there was a range of speakers with wide experience, such as people from the Conservation Council of Western Australia and others, such as Luc Longley who have travelled around the world and seen many resorts of the type proposed at Ningaloo. They are very concerned that this important place will be despoiled by a huge and totally inappropriate development that will permanently destroy the wild natural beauty of Ningaloo.

I seek leave to table this speech in the hope that the Premier will read it because many people would have liked him to have been at the rally and heard what was said on the day.

Leave granted. [See paper No 571.]

*Western Australia's Water Resources - Adjournment Debate*

**HON JOHN FISCHER** (Mining and Pastoral) [11.48 pm]: I will make some brief comments on the use of the water resources in Western Australia. Many industries in this country fail to flourish, not because they are inefficient but because they do not have the critical mass to provide the economies of scale that are necessary to develop and grow. Quite frankly, this is an area in which Governments could assist. Their failure to do so is either as a result of ignorance, entrenched ideological nonsense or simply an unwillingness to support the

interests of minority groups rather than the overall community interest. On this occasion I want to talk about one industry that is languishing because of a lack of scale, and I refer to the marron fishing industry. One of the problems with the marron fishing industry is that we do not have the available resources to guarantee continuity of supply for a base catch to make an export industry viable. We should look at this problem in a rational manner and tackle it methodically.

The Water Corporation has control of many dams that, if managed properly, could provide the necessary resource around which this industry could undoubtedly grow. At present the dams suffer significant predatory action from poachers. This does not do anything for the industry, as it tends to be wasteful of the resource with breeding females and under-sized stock all being taken illegally. I propose that the Water Corporation enter into a management agreement with the aquaculture centre at Curtin University of Technology to properly manage and exploit the rich potential that is available. The proper management of these resources will provide the economic incentive to prevent the stealing of fish and marron stocks. It would also provide a scientific base to enhance our knowledge of the entire ecosystem of the dams, not to mention the additional job opportunities that would be created for the many excellent graduates of aquaculture who have to go overseas for employment after they finish their courses.

A substantial part of the profit that Curtin University could take from the operation of this fishery should be mandated to fund the development of freshwater aquaculture research facilities based at its Kalgoorlie campus. I am sure that if there were a guaranteed base catch, other growers would benefit from the research and the ability to sell into an established market. I am also sure that research would expand the available habitat where marron could be successfully grown. Some of the abandoned open cuts in the goldfields would certainly be suitable, as the water is deep and shaded. One of the unusual features found all over the goldfields, stretching up into the Murchison area, is that these geological excavations generally run north and south, so they have direct sunlight on them only for a few hours during the middle of the day. I am sure that with the addition of other suitable fish species, the goldfields could become an attractive area for recreational fishing, as well as provide a new industry and an additional source of income for pastoralists. With the sensible decision to transfer water from the Wellington and Harris Dams, it is inevitable that dams such as the Stirling Dam, which is relatively free of redfin perch, will become infested with these exotic species.

The Minister for Racing and Gaming answered a question the other day and stated that there were redfin above the Stirling River Dam at the moment but they were not in huge supply. The unusual thing about this fish is that it is particularly aggressive and extremely fertile. For example, brown or rainbow trout can be expected to produce about 4 000 eggs per kilogram of body weight, whereas a redfin will produce 60 000 eggs for the same body weight. At present this fish is considered a menace, as it diverts a lot of growth into sexual maturity and as a consequence is not usually developed into a commercial size. However, as an eating fish it has a flavour second to none, and if research could find a way of transferring its quick sexual maturity into growth, it would become an excellent aquaculture fish demanding a premium price. It would be especially suitable for areas with internal drainage. The eastern goldfields, with its open cuts, would provide security for scientific experimentation, as there is no chance of further river contamination. It might be possible to breed a fish with an extra chromosome, and these triploids tend to be much bigger but are generally infertile. This would provide an excellent predator for smaller redfin and would be a good game fish, especially on light tackle. In any case, a managed fishery would open up all this potential and more. It would not in any way threaten the water quality of our dams and might indeed enhance it.

Although I have not officially spoken to Curtin University about this idea, there seems to be a considerable amount of interest for it in general conversation. I am on record as supporting the establishment of an aquaculture centre in the old Cassidy Street swimming pool area in Kalgoorlie. I am not sure, but I do not believe that the Water Corporation actually needs government approval to implement a plan of this nature. Though it may be strongly and irrationally opposed by the Greens, given their disproportionate influence on this Government one would hope the idea would not be buried in bureaucratic mishmash to the detriment of the economic development of the wider community and the issue of consequent employment. These initiatives would be extremely beneficial to regional Western Australia and should be investigated to enhance the future of our aquaculture prospects in these inland areas.

*Ningaloo Reef Rally - Adjournment Debate*

**HON BRUCE DONALDSON** (Agricultural) [11.56 pm]: I was prompted by Hon Jim Scott to say a few words when listening to what he was saying about the so-called great crowd at Fremantle for the rally in support of the Ningaloo Reef. I looked at the news footage, and in my estimation at least 95 per cent of those people have never been up the north west coast. Some members in this House understand the area very well. Hon Norman Moore is one and Hon John Fischer is another. Hon John Fisher was a member of the Carnarvon Shire Council when Coral Bay just happened; there was no real planning or anything else. He will tell members that more

damage will probably be occurring from the 3 000 or so people who are camped in that area. One of the great ways to protect the environment is to be able to manage people, as people pressure destroys the environment when it is uncontrolled. I am not trying to put words into Hon John Fischer's mouth or saying whether he supports the development or not, but there are ways and means of controlling people on a development of this size or on a smaller development. I can remember when the Hillarys marina was first talked about and that many people marched on the streets against that development. That is now one of the icons that people visit. People vote with their feet or their motorcars, because one cannot move down at Hillarys Boat Harbour at many times. It has been a real success story, and it attracts people. Most Australians are attracted to the coast or some development.

I have visited an island off the east coast of Malaysia called Redang Island; it is off the coast of Terengganu. It is a marine park area and a habitat for sea turtles, but the people there manage people. They have a couple of not very big four or five-star accommodation complexes and a golf course. They pipe water from the mainland - they do not muck around - and they have a state-of-the-art sewerage system. If people take a launch over there, they are restricted to where they can go. They have established one or two low-cost accommodation places on another part of the island. People are being managed. Because only so many people are there at any given time, it is possible to protect the environment. My wife, two friends and I were going on a dive trip. We thought that we would walk to the floating pontoon and get onto the dive boat. The next thing we knew was that a voice yelled out and asked where we were going. We were told to go back and sit down. All the visitors were made to congregate in a little covered shelter. When the guides were ready to go, they marched all of us onto the pontoon and onto the boat. A visitors centre enables people to understand the marine park and the type of fish and sea turtles that are in it. When I came back, which was just before we lost government, I said to the Premier that I felt it appropriate that somebody from the Western Australian Tourism Commission, somebody from the Department of Environmental Protection and whoever else was necessary, should visit there to see the facilities. I see that the parliamentary secretary is dying to go there.

Hon John Fischer: The Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance should go there.

Hon BRUCE DONALDSON: In any event, it was an interesting exercise. The people there take the environment very seriously. They know that if they can protect it, they can continue to have visitors. Visitors must book about 12 months ahead, because Europeans have found the place and they are travelling there for the beautiful warm waters and the sand. Even I did some diving, which I had not done for quite some time.

I am always worried when a group of people do not understand what they are marching about. Somebody might put the idea in their head that they must protect the environment. However, the organisers of those marches are not telling the participants that more damage is done to the environment when people are not controlled. That is the sad part. Whether this development is too big or whether people should be looking at smaller types of development, I do not know; it is not for me to say. All I can say is that from the precedents, not only in Australia but also around the world, we can learn a great deal. We must look at the issues very carefully and not be swayed by the emotional hype given by some groups of people. Some of the people in the crowd would have been at Woomera, at the cordon below Franklin Dam and at Port Hedland.

Hon John Fischer: They are the rent-a-mob.

Hon BRUCE DONALDSON: Yes, the rent-a-crowd. Video footage was taken of those people. Certain organisations could show those videotapes and identify some of the ringleaders of some of those marches. The videotapes should show the same ringleaders were at the demonstrations about the forests and at all the others.

It annoys me when ill-informed or uninformed people want to create emotional hype in the wider community without having the full facts and knowledge of a subject. They need to be taught the lesson that if people cannot be controlled in an environment, they will destroy it, because people do destroy an environment when they are not controlled.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.03 am (Wednesday)*

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