



## Answer to hospital woes

THE DISPUTE between John Malouf and John Coochey (Letters, October 30) as to whether the Little Company of Mary is entitled to the value of the unexpired portion of the Calvary lease (which, incidentally, might well be zero – because LCM didn't pay for it, and the hospital is for public purposes, not a profit-making venture) is quite irrelevant.

The proposed payment of \$77 million is for the current, depreciated value of the building, not for the “unexpired portion of the lease” of the land.

I (and probably most Canberrans) don't care whether LCM or the Government run the hospital; all we object to is taxpayers paying this \$77 million for a building we've already paid for, a rather hefty price to pay to fix “an accounting prob-

lem” (Katy Gallagher, “Church attacks Calvary ‘Secrecy’, October 31, p.2)! It's really amazing that a government would go that far merely to fix an accounting problem (the problem being that, on paper, the Government doesn't actually “own” the hospital), when there's a much simpler, less expensive way to do it – viz., to make the capital element of future annual grants to LCM expenditure on behalf of the Government, giving the Government ownership of the assets that expenditure produces.

As the donor, surely the Government can do this.

And I see nothing in the documentation about Calvary, including the agreement with LCM, to prevent it.

R. S. Gilbert. Braddon