

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES, APPOINTMENT

66. Mr D'ORAZIO to the Leader of the House:

In the interests of accountability, will the Leader of the House please advise when the Public Accounts Committee and the three portfolio-based standing committees of this House will be established?

Mr KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. He is one of a number of members on this side of the House who are very keen to get the committees established and to be part of them to ensure that they perform their roles properly. The role of the committees is a very important one: they are part of the mechanisms of Parliament to ensure that the Government of the day is accountable. One would think that all members of Parliament would be keen to see the committees established as quickly as possible to ensure that we have good government in this State. The Leader of the National Party wrote to the Clerk of the Assembly on 23 May and put forward names of National Party members who wished to be appointed to committees. I have been approached by Independent members who wish to be appointed to the committees. I spoke to the leader of opposition business in this Chamber and Independents and others almost three weeks ago indicating that we needed to move this matter along and that I wished to do it this week. On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week I went into a round of discussions with various players including Independents, the Leader of the National Party and the leader of opposition business so that a motion to establish the committees could be proposed in the House. More members want to be appointed than there are positions. I wanted to allocate positions according to the percentage of members in the House with allegiance to particular parties or in the group that I roughly call Independents. However, as some members would obviously miss out, an agreement was reached. Decisions had to be made about which members could be appointed according to their specific interests. I saw the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and asked for a list of interested Liberal Party members. I was told that they could not work out a list; it was a bit too hard for them as they had only been told three weeks ago! The National Party was told a month ago and it still has not provided any nominations. This means that the issue will have to be left until next week because we do not want to fill the committees on a motion -

Mr Barnett: We deferred normal business so that the Government could put two Bills through.

Mr KOBELKE: So that got in the way of your decision-making? The Opposition is obviously having considerable difficulty getting its act together. Yesterday, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition sought an extension of time to speak that involved a motion of the House. I asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition whether that meant there would be a large number of speakers, and he told me that he had three more speakers to follow and that the speeches would be short. There were four speakers - he could not even get that right! I am not calling the Opposition a disorganised rabble; in fact, the Opposition would make a disorganised rabble look good! The committees should be established and I hope the Liberal Party will make up its mind so that the motion is put early next week, the committees are established and they can get on with the very important tasks that are required of them by this House.

The SPEAKER: Question time is now finished.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: My point of order relates to Standing Order No 76 and the right of members of Parliament to address questions to the Chair. I would like the opportunity to address the Chair.

The SPEAKER: My reading of the point of order is that if a motion is put on notice it will be considered.

Mr BARNETT: I do not canvass your ruling, Mr Speaker, but it is difficult for us to discuss the administration of this Parliament if the Chair is unable to take questions.

The SPEAKER: I am happy to address particular issues as they arise but I must comply with standing orders. The member must put forward proper notice. I am happy to discuss the conduct of question time with the Leader of the Opposition at any time outside the sitting of the House.