

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE**

*Special*

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [3.15 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 9 April 2002, at 2.00 pm.

**MR JOHNSON** (Hillarys) [3.15 pm]: I will not keep members for long, because I think they have had enough of this House over the past three weeks, with the very long sitting hours until 2.00 am, midnight and 11.00 pm. It is not reasonable any more to sit those sorts of hours for a three-week period. The previous Government adjusted the sitting hours of this House some four years ago. After it did that, we very rarely sat after midnight. About a minute after midnight was one of the latest times that we sat. I urge the Leader of the House to think back on what it was like.

Mrs Roberts: You sat us through to breakfast.

Mr JOHNSON: That was a long time ago. I urge the Leader of the House to seriously contemplate this matter over the Easter period, which is a time of goodwill. He should try to instil some of that goodwill into his brain, into his thinking and into his plans for the running of this House. Very often, three-week stretches are too long, especially when large and contentious Bills are going through the House. I accept that it puts a lot of pressure on the minister or whoever is handling the legislation, but it also puts a lot of pressure on the Opposition - in this case, on our very own member for Kingsley. As manager of opposition business in this House, I place on record my thanks to the member for Kingsley. I pay tribute to her for the sterling work that she has done. She has worked harder than anybody in this House in the past few months, quite frankly.

Mr Kucera: Certainly on your side.

Mr JOHNSON: The minister could do with a bit of work. He does not look like he has done any work for a long time. Unfortunately, my colleague and friend the member for Kingsley seems to have all the shadow portfolios that carry a heavy workload. Perhaps she should think about whether she wants to handle all of them. I know that the member for Kingsley is a workaholic and needs very little sleep. I liken her in many respects to a lady for whom I have great admiration and who led a wonderful nation. She sorted out all the union thugs in the United Kingdom. People in the workplace there have never had it so good. Tony Blair has not changed a thing since he has been in government, because he has become quite a good conservative leader. If members have read about his views on gay and lesbian law reform, they will know that he will not allow de facto couples to adopt children. I think it is time that the Premier visited the UK again and spoke to his friend and mentor, Tony Blair, because he might learn a few things. We had progressed, but members opposite have put us back a million years by passing the labour relations legislation today.

I will not keep the House any longer. The person to whom I liken my friend and colleague the member for Kingsley is in fact Margaret Thatcher - a world leader who used to have about the same amount of sleep each night as does the member for Kingsley. Margaret Thatcher got the United Kingdom back onto a sound economic footing, with record employment and very low unemployment, and everybody enjoying a good standard of living. The work that the member for Kingsley does in this State while we are in opposition will help us get back into government in three years.

This Government has passed some abhorrent legislation. It has done that only because it has the numbers, and by ramming the legislation through this House. Two pieces of legislation were particularly abhorrent: the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill and the Bill we passed today. We should have changed the title of that Bill because it is one of the most draconian Bills I have seen in many years. It will take us back to the early nineteenth century.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I hope you are returning to the motion.

Mr JOHNSON: I am. It is for those reasons that we should break for a week. I would love to move an amendment to come back in two weeks, but I do not want to be awkward and I like to try to work with the Leader of the House. However, I will now have to think twice before responding when he asks for an agreement or gives an assurance. I will have to consider whether I can trust him to stick to that assurance. Only time will prove whether I can take his word again. I hope I can, because I like to take people at their word. I hope we can -

Mrs Roberts: I hope your nose grows back.

Mr JOHNSON: The minister could do with a bit of surgery herself. It is up to her if she wants to be nasty or personal and get down in the gutter.

Mrs Roberts: Have you heard about Pinocchio?

Mr JOHNSON: I can take anything she wants to dish out to me. However, she should not force me down into the gutter with her; nor should she interrupt me. She should go on her holiday and try to get some sense into her head.

On those wonderful, endearing notes of love and friendship over the holy weekend, I hope that members will reflect on what they have done over the past three weeks in particular. I hope that when we come back, we can put some good legislation through this House that will help everybody in Western Australia, not just the union thugs who simply want to rip people off. All those unions do is pay their officials fantastic amounts of money. They own boats, property and all sorts of things. That is the way it is.

Mr Hyde: Jesus Christ was a union leader.

Mr JOHNSON: The member should not take that name in vain. We are leading into the holy weekend. It is a denigration of this House to take that name in vain.

We are looking forward to the short break. We will be back in just over a week, and the Opposition will do the job it is supposed to do; that is, try its utmost to keep the Government honest. It may be a difficult task, but we will be there, every step of the way, for the next three years until the election.

In the meantime, I wish everybody in the House a very happy and holy weekend.

**MR D'ORAZIO** (Ballajura) [3.22 pm]: It is Easter -

Mr Johnson: It is the convention that only the Leader of the House and the manager of opposition business speak on this motion.

Mr D'ORAZIO: The other side of the House took great pleasure in extolling the virtues and performance of the member for Kingsley. I agree that she has worked very hard. I would like to put on the record my appreciation of the performance of the Leader of the House. He has worked extremely hard during 50 hours of debate. Everyone who has been involved in debates will recognise the amount of work that went into that. I want to put on record our appreciation of his contribution. He has not only had carriage of the legislation; he has also performed his duties as the Leader of the House. He has conducted himself in a fantastic manner. I thank him for that, and wish all the members of this place a holy and happy Easter. I will see them after the break.

**MR KOBELKE** (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [3.23 pm]: It was not my intention to speak on the motion to adjourn until Tuesday, 9 April. However, given the comments, I will make a brief response. I thank the member for Ballajura for his remarks. The member for Hillarys as usual made it very difficult to respond in any rational, factual way. I will ignore the ramblings of the member. However, the member did make one good point, which I intended to raise during the third reading but did not have an opportunity to do so. The debate on the labour relations Bill was very long; it took 51 hours. As we know, the three industrial relations Bills in 1993 took 37.5 hours to debate. We have debated this Bill for more than 50 per cent longer than those three combined. Leaving aside the debate on the abortion Bill, which went for longer but was not a Government Bill, the next longest debate occurred on the school education Bill. The total debating time on that Bill went for only 45 hours, which is considerably less time than we spent on this Bill.

Clearly, the Opposition delayed and filibustered the passage of the Bill. In saying that, I acknowledge the superhuman effort made by the member for Kingsley. Although she debated the matters within the Bill to the point of delaying them, she was never irrelevant or repetitious. In many cases she put me on the spot and forced me to answer important questions, which is the role of the Opposition. She did her job very well. She raised the concerns of various constituencies extremely well. All members have recognised that the member for Kingsley has done a sterling job, although it made it difficult for us and dragged out the process. She clearly shines out in the Opposition as the only person of talent and ability. She is the only member who works hard, which shows in the contribution she makes.

The Bill underwent more consultation than any other labour relations Bill in the time that I have been in Parliament. I thank the peak industry bodies, who I will not name because some of them might be embarrassed by the amount of time they spent talking to us. Although they were not all supportive of the Bill, they gave us a lot of time, which we appreciate. I thank UnionsWA and a range of businesses and other unions. Their help was possible only because so many people gave me their support. My parliamentary secretary, the member for Peel, put in a huge effort, as did the staff in my ministerial office. On one occasion, we held a meeting in the foyer because a member of my staff met with one industry group in one room while I met with another group in my room. We did not have a third room available in which another staff member could meet with another union or industry body. Extensive consultation was held. Again, I thank the member for Peel for the amount of work he put in and the results he helped us to achieve. I thank the many people in the labour relations department of the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection, many of whom assisted in the Chamber. They made a huge effort, as did the parliamentary draftspeople. My sincere thanks go to those people and all members on

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 28 March 2002]

p9155c-9157a

Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rob Johnson; Deputy Speaker; Mr John D'Orazio

---

both sides of the House who made it a profitable, if not a tiring debate. I wish everyone a happy Easter and look forward to seeing everyone back here in a week's time.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.27 pm*

---