

APPROVALS AND RELATED REFORMS (NO. 3) (CROWN LAND) BILL 2009

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Chairman of Committees (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm) in the chair; Hon Wendy Duncan (Parliamentary Secretary) in charge of the bill.

Clause 7: Section 66 inserted —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I think that just before we broke for afternoon tea —

Hon Norman Moore: You attended, I noticed. Did you have any cucumber sandwiches or not?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: No, I could not find any cucumber sandwiches. I think Hon Norman Moore might have misunderstood the point I was making earlier in this debate.

Hon Norman Moore: You made snide remarks —

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I never made snide remarks. What the Leader of the House means is that he did not much like it, but I am being very charitable to him in suggesting that he may have misheard what I said. I am saying that he has never wanted to abolish afternoon tea.

Hon Norman Moore: You made snide remarks all afternoon about cucumber sandwiches and then you went and enjoyed afternoon tea. That is all I am saying.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: There were not any cucumber sandwiches.

Hon Norman Moore: We will make sure there are some there for you in future, and perhaps a little cream cake.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: That would be lovely, thank you, with the crusts cut off!

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, members!

Hon SALLY TALBOT: We clearly need to pursue this at another time, Mr Chairman. The point I was making was merely that the opposition has consistently pointed out over a number of years that the business of this place can be conducted more efficiently were we not to break for afternoon tea.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon Sally Talbot has the call.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Had the Leader of the House been listening to what I was saying, he would have heard that I was expressing my pleasure at the fact that we had not acceded to the Labor Party's request to abolish afternoon tea. I was feeling in need of a bit of sustenance after the parliamentary secretary landed on us the shock news that we would have to apply for information under the Freedom of Information Act, because she is now taking a bill through this chamber that makes secret information that is currently public. Before we broke for afternoon tea, I think the parliamentary secretary was going to endeavour to get back to us with some information. May I just get the parliamentary secretary to indicate whether she has that information now?

Hon WENDY DUNCAN: I will take this opportunity to answer the question asked by Hon Sally Talbot prior to afternoon tea, and then, unfortunately, due to an interruption, I might have to ask —

Hon Sally Talbot: No, that was my question: whether you had an answer.

Hon WENDY DUNCAN: I thank Hon Sally Talbot for that.

Prior to the break, I said there had been in the vicinity of 30 applications received under the Aboriginal Heritage Act in the past year. Hon Sally Talbot asked how many applications had been received, where they were from, and how many were refused. The applications were mainly from government agencies such as Main Roads Western Australia, the Water Corporation and LandCorp, or management bodies from other government agencies. Under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, the lessees do their applications themselves. None, or very few, are refused, and by the time they reach the Minister for Lands, a lot of the other studies required are already well underway, such as the ethnological studies, and the anthropological studies are already happening. Perhaps the fact that these are standard applications that very rarely have any complications is one of the reasons that it is not necessary for them to go through the minister and then on to the minister responsible under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Have we confirmed that there were about 30 applications in the past year?

Hon Wendy Duncan: Yes.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Unless I misunderstood what the parliamentary secretary said earlier in the debate, these applications still have to go to the Minister for Lands to be delegated, do they not?

Hon WENDY DUNCAN: The applications go to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. I am really not quite sure what Hon Sally Talbot means by this question. In a previous answer I gave, I said that the authority to make the application can happen at some time previously, perhaps when the lease has been drawn up or a management body indicates that it has a project or proposal that it wants to go forward. It does not have to be at the time that the application goes to the minister responsible under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: That would be the case where there was a blanket delegation given, but I thought the parliamentary secretary said earlier that there would inevitably be a number of incidents when there was a one-off delegation in relation to a specific proposal.

Hon WENDY DUNCAN: Once the authorisation has been given to, say, a regional development officer, that is where the time will be saved. The officer can then deal with the issues relating to making the application according to the Aboriginal Heritage Act. It is not as if it has to happen every time; once a regional development officer has the authorisation, he or she can deal with the relevant matters.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: That is in the case of a regional development officer—that is, an officer of the Department of Regional Development and Lands. However, according to the information that the parliamentary secretary has just provided, the majority of the 30 applications were from Main Roads Western Australia and other government departments. What would be the provision for those? There would not be a blanket delegation to Main Roads officers, would there?

Hon WENDY DUNCAN: There could well be authorisation in favour of management bodies such as Main Roads, Water Corporation or LandCorp so that they can make an application directly.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to temporary orders.