

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [12.16 pm]: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable private members' business to have priority today, 29 June, between 4.00 pm and 8.00 pm.

The moving of this motion will enable the house to sit longer tonight. That is necessary so that we can make some reasonable progress on legislation. Our progress overall this year has been relatively slow, and if legislation is going to be debated at great length, we need to either spend more time here or use other measures to ensure that an effective approach is taken to the long list of legislation.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [12.17 pm]: I find it interesting that the Leader of the House mentioned the house sitting late tonight in his brief comments. I remind the Leader of the House that we were scheduled to sit late last week, but that of course did not result. That begs a question about the handling of the house's business by the government in progressing legislation, and indeed the efficient and effective use of the house's time given that we were given notice last week of the intention to sit on Wednesday evening. In fact, I was particularly surprised that we did not sit late last week, given that the government had indicated it wanted certain legislation through. Then, of course, we had some angst on Thursday afternoon about legislation that the opposition was accused of holding up, when the government knew very well that a number of speakers had third reading contributions they wished to make. We also know about the threat made to the opposition with regard to the Treasurer's bill and an event being held on the Thursday evening. It was an important event to celebrate the Muslim breaking of the fast. This is not an attack on my good friend the government Whip, because Whips stick together. It was disappointing that a veiled threat was made to the opposition around the bill being handled by the Treasurer. It was the Treasurer's bill—remember that he is the minister responsible—and we were told that if he was not given a pair or permission to go to the event, although we had no notice that a pair request for him to do that was in, he would send somebody else there. That person would be instructed to let the important audience know that the opposition was preventing the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests being present. That is just not on. I got very angry with the Whip, but I did not express my anger towards him because he was simply articulating a message, and you should never shoot the messenger! This is an example of how the government handles business in this place. If we had sat late previously to deal with that bill, as was proposed last Wednesday, not only would that sort of threat have been unnecessary but also the legislation would have been passed, certainly by just after question time on Thursday. The Leader of the House knows I like him and I have a great deal of respect for him—he is one of the few!

Dr A.D. Buti: Be careful, he will be overruled by the Premier!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, but let us not get into libraries. Librarians have had a big win today in another example of a government minister being overruled by the Premier, as was clearly articulated today on morning radio. The librarians had a big win, and good on them, but that goes to how the government handles legislation through this place.

An important bill is currently being progressed through this place. The government has a list of its bills, as well as a number that do not appear on this list, that will also need to be progressed as we come towards the end of the session and go into to the break. Please, do not threaten the opposition and attempt to blackmail it with veiled threats over important community events that we are invited to.

The government is not able to handle the business of the house and it has tried to turn it around on the opposition and use that as a way of denigrating members of Parliament, which is not appropriate and is totally unacceptable. The opposition will support this motion and private members' business will get precedence as proposed by the motion.

Question put and passed.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): On that basis there will be a dinner break between 6.00 and 7.00 pm this evening.