

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (REGIONAL SUBSIDIARIES) BILL 2014 —
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [10.22 am]: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the member for Moore to move the second reading of the Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill 2014 during the time allocated for government business on Thursday, 11 September 2014.

By way of brief explanation, the member for Moore has given notice of this bill and would like to complete the second reading speech, and being the very accommodating government that we are, we have agreed to that. That will occur sometime this afternoon. I consider it unreasonable that the member should undertake that during private members' time on Wednesday, which is primarily the opposition's time; therefore, we are accommodating this occurring later today.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [10.23 am]: The opposition will look with great interest when the Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill 2014 is introduced into the house and is second read. The Leader of the House has indicated that it will be second read this afternoon. The key issue is when the government will give priority to this bill, after last night's interesting exchange between the Premier and the member for Moore when the Premier demonstrated an absolute disdain for the member for Moore's comments, along the lines of, "Please, Liberal Premier, give us an assurance that regional WA will not have forced council amalgamations." The Premier almost spat at him across the chamber in his disdain for the member, claiming that local governments in regional WA were crying out for forced amalgamations. The member for Moore rebuked the Premier on a couple of occasions in the exchange yesterday, saying that the Premier did not have any idea what local communities in regional WA were saying. This sets up a very interesting situation for the National Party and the Liberal Party, because the member for Bunbury was lauded by the Premier last night for being a "pro-amalgamationist" in his area, highlighting that the Shires of Capel, Dardanup and Harvey and the City of Bunbury are the next targets for this government. Of course, those in the Peel region would also be quivering because that same view is —

Mr G.M. Castrilli interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not know whether the member for Bunbury's mate the member for Murray-Wellington is keen! I will be very interested when the debate is brought on to see whether we see any further exchanges such as we saw last night when the government narrowly won a motion in this place during private members' business when the National Party crossed the floor. I urge the National Party to put immense pressure on regional Liberal members, who will probably be going around saying one thing in the country to try to assure regional Western Australia that there will be no forced amalgamations, but in the party room will lay down like lambs and allow the Premier to ride roughshod over them. This sets up a very, very interesting situation for the National Party and the Liberal Party.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will be interested to see where the member for Eyre is sitting on this, because he has been able to demonstrate in the past some independent thinking. He has not demonstrated that in his acts when he has voted; he still tends to follow the Premier's line.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not think the member has crossed the floor, has he? National Party members did last night. Did the member for Eyre cross the floor last night? No, he did not—despite the rhetoric. The member for Eyre and other Liberal members of regional WA are on notice now. Their mates from the National Party have put them on notice. Remember what they did to the member for Eyre during the election.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, we are debating the suspension motion. I think you are getting into the substantive part of the bill.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I was hoping we might see the bill brought on now for debate. Does the member for Eyre remember what the National Party did to him during the last election? The member remembers very well.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Mandurah!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He remembers the undermining they did to him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Mandurah! Will you please debate the suspension motion.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know that the member is still angry about that. The opposition is very happy for this bill, that has been introduced by the member for Moore, to be second read this afternoon. We will be very keen

to see how much of a priority the government gives it when it is brought on for debate. We hope it will be sooner rather than later. When the bill is brought on for debate and members on both sides of the house have an opportunity to debate it, we will look very closely at the Liberal members of the government, particularly the regional members of government, and the sorts of things that they say in that debate. We now know, from the exchange last night between the Premier and the member for Moore, that there is very much a deep division between the National Party and the Liberal Party, and that will be exposed further when this bill is brought on for debate.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [10.27 am]: I want to comment briefly on this issue. I note that this motion will allow the member for Moore's Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill 2014 to be second read and therefore allow it to be debated at some future point. I hope it is debated. I am supportive of the general concept of regional subsidiaries. We will have to look at the detail in the bill, of course, before deciding how we will vote, but I support the general concept. The concept put forward by the member for Moore, as I understand it, would more easily allow regional councils to work together and share resources, plant and equipment, staff and the like as an alternative to an amalgamation process. In other words, it would allow for greater local say and democratic decision-making of who represents the people but there would be greater sharing of resources across regional areas. That is a reasonable concept. It has been talked about for a long time. If the legislation is sensible and that is the outcome it achieves, that would be good. It will be interesting to see whether it is given time for debate. Of course, the Premier has a different view. We heard it last night with the sniping and nastiness towards the National Party. I saw the look on the Premier's face when the Leader of the National Party was sitting next to me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, please debate the suspension.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I can debate the suspension for the next 20 minutes, if you would like, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I think it is relevant that we had a big debate on local government last night and now we have an alternative option to the one that the Premier has put. I think it is important that this bill be brought on for debate. I seek an indication from the government as to whether it will agree to bring on this legislation.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a second reading.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the government going to allow it to be brought on for debate?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The normal rules of the house apply.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay. The government determines when legislation comes on.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's in the rules.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The rules are that the government—in fact, the Leader of the House—determines when legislation is brought on for debate.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a private member's bill. It's private members' time. It's not a government bill.

Mr M. McGOWAN: So the government would not suspend standing orders to allow the government time to debate it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a private member's bill. Normal rules will apply.

Mr M. McGOWAN: So the Premier would only allow it to be debated in private members' time.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's a private member's bill. It seems to be one on one. That's how it works.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Eyre has not been here that long but I will explain to him how it works.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: How long have you been here? Probably too long!

Mr M. McGOWAN: About twice as long as the member for Eyre.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, direct your remarks through the Chair please.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I just want to explain something to the member for Eyre, if he will just let me. He is sounding like the Premier in his treatment of the National Party. He is looking like the Premier, too—similar to the sourness with which the Premier was looking at the Leader of the National Party last night when he was sitting next to me. The poor Leader of the National Party had to sit here facing the Premier whilst he was voting with Labor.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, direct your remarks through the Chair.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 11 September 2014]

p6124b-6128a

Mr John Day; Mr David Templeman; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Shane Love

Mr M. McGOWAN: The government can suspend standing orders to allow a private member's bill to be debated. If it wants to do that, that is what the government can do. We would support that because we would be unlikely to give up our time —

Mr C.J. Barnett: What happened to the generosity of spirit?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is opposition time. The National Party is part of the government. I know there is an almighty faction fight going on inside the government right now. I know that the National Party is revolting. We all know that the National Party is revolting. The Liberal Party knows the National Party is revolting. A massive faction fight is going on inside the government.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! There's too much interjection. Hansard cannot record all that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am being interjected on. I am merely talking about process. We know that the National Party is revolting; it is fighting with the government at every opportunity. Here we see another example of it. We are saying to the government, "You give this legislation government time so it can come on for debate. We would love to see it being debated." Private members' time is for the opposition. It is opposition time. The National Party was part of the government. Obviously now it is separating itself because it disagrees with a bunch of things going on inside the government. There is an almighty faction fight on a range of issues as we speak. It was writ large last night when the National Party crossed the floor. The Premier sat there looking like he had swallowed a lemon watching National Party members traipse across the chamber to join with the opposition in supporting democracy in Western Australia. Congratulations to the National Party for supporting Labor last night. It is great that it did, but it shows that huge divisions are going on inside government. We saw it at the National Party conference on the weekend; we see it regularly on a range of things and we saw it last night.

We would like to see this legislation brought on for debate in government time. That would be a great thing. The government would treat the member for Moore fairly if it did that. I would hope that National Party ministers inside the government allow the member for Moore to do that because it seems like his legislation is reasonable. I certainly think that it deserves greater priority than some of the laws the government has been dealing with lately. It would be an interesting test to see whether the government regards this legislation as reasonable or whether the National Party supports the Premier's approach to these issues, which is basically about bulldozing opposition in local communities. We saw it last night. Suddenly a new concept emerged of an outback shire of those tiny communities north of Kalgoorlie—an area in excess of the size of Victoria, probably the size of New South Wales. Suddenly we will have a council of that scale out there. The Premier said that that is what will happen under this government. The member for Moore, to his credit, stood up and said he does not support that; he supports local say. I think the regional subsidiaries bill is a good opportunity to allow local say with greater sharing of resources between communities. It will be interesting to see which view prevails—the Premier's bulldozing or the other view, which I would be happy to give adequate and proper consideration to when it is brought on in government time. We will look forward to government time being made available for this bill. Private member's time is opposition time.

Mr C.J. Barnett: No, it's not; it's private members'.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is opposition time.

Mr C.J. Barnett: It's not opposition time at all.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Eyre! Order!

Dr G.G. Jacobs: How long have you been here? You should already know that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Eyre is a newcomer.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Eyre, I call you for the first time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Eyre is a newcomer! He does not know the nuances of this place. He needs to stay here a little longer to learn these things.

We do not support the bulldozing approach of the government and we look forward to having a proper debate on these issues. We also look forward to the continuing disintegration of the government. We are watching it with interest.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! We do not want to have a wall of sound drowning out the Leader of the Opposition. Leader of the Opposition, please direct your remarks to the suspension motion.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am nearly finished. It is enjoyable to watch the disintegration and the argument going on inside the government. We look forward to that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: How many went? How many ministers?

Mr M. McGOWAN: There is the narkiness, nastiness and bile creeping across the chamber from the Premier again. The Premier's nastiness, behaviour —

Mr C.J. Barnett: Rorting members of Parliament is a serious issue.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier should withdraw that—accusing members of this place of rorting.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr A.D. BUTI: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Premier made an assertion against the member for Girrawheen that is clearly unparliamentary and I ask that he withdraw it. He knows what he said. He should withdraw it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unfortunately, there were so many voices that I did not hear.

Dr A.D. BUTI: He said that as a committee member, she rorted the committee system. That is unparliamentary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Premier, withdraw please.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I withdraw. I will not resile.

Debate Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: That was not an unqualified withdrawal but, anyway, that is the Premier's style; that is what he does.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I don't trudge to the corruption commission, as Labor did. It was a revolving door, the corruption commission, under Labor.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If the Premier wants, we can have a debate about the five ministers that his government has sacked. All those ministers have gone. One has gone recently from this chamber. We can have a whole debate about this and about the Premier's performance in government. We will have a debate about the Environmental Protection Authority if the government likes. Let us bring that on. Billions of dollars of investment was put at risk because of the Premier's plan to manage conflicts of interest in government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are debating a suspension order; please direct your remarks to that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I keep getting provoked. The Premier keeps provoking me with his nastiness and bile across the chamber.

In any event, we support the motion to allow this Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill to be second read and look forward to it coming before the house. In giving this support, we note the enormous divisions inside the government, which I think has provoked this legislation coming forward as a reaction to what the Premier is now saying about regional communities and regional councils. I note it is also contrary to what the Minister for Local Government assured the Western Australian Local Government Association conference, which I attended six weeks or so ago. This is no doubt, I think, a justified reaction from the National Party to what the Liberal Party is trying to do to people in the bush.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [10.40 am]: Being the topic of some discussion, I thought I might have a contribution to make here. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support for what is to be achieved through this Local Government Amendment (Regional Subsidiaries) Bill, which I would like to introduce, and I appreciate the offer of his support. However, I have had discussions with the leader of government business in the house and, as such, I have been offered the opportunity for the bill to be second read today. That is recorded on today's notice paper, so I will not support a move beyond that kind offer. I thank the leader of government business for making that offer.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: The time for it was yesterday; this is government time, in case the new minister does not realise it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Midland!

Mr R.S. LOVE: The bill will be read a second time today, and that is the important thing as far as I am concerned. Once again, I thank the government very much for making that time available. We will have that discussion. Yes, I believe that this subsidiaries model is an important matter that needs to be discussed. I believe

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 11 September 2014]

p6124b-6128a

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it offers important reform for local government, especially in country areas and I look forward to the opportunity later today to make the second reading speech.

Question put and passed.