

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRECEDENCE OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [12.11 pm]: I move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable private members' business to have priority from 4.00 pm to 8.00 pm on Wednesday, 16 March 2011.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [12.12 pm]: I will comment briefly on this motion. This motion is to allow the house to sit this evening beyond the ordinary time that we sit on a Wednesday evening, which is seven o'clock. This will allow a dinner break to be taken between 6.00 and 7.00 pm, so private members' business will be divided into two-thirds before the dinner break and one-third after the dinner break. Then the house will sit beyond the conclusion of private members' business, which will be at eight o'clock. So the house will sit late once again. I think the house sat until 11.30 last night or —

Ms M.M. Quirk: No, 11.39 pm.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It was 11.39.

Mr R.F. Johnson: No, it didn't. It was 11.12. Look at the *Hansard*; it was 11.12. We could have gone home a lot earlier.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I left at 11.00 pm. I assumed the house would sit a lot later, and I had a long way to go, so I bugged off —

Mr D.A. Templeman: I was still here!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Mandurah was still here.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I haven't left! Look at me: I cut myself shaving this morning due to tiredness!

Mr M. McGOWAN: He has cut himself in protest; the member for Mandurah slashed himself in protest; and, as one who goes near him will know, he has not changed his shirt since yesterday.

The point I am trying to make is that the house will now be required to stay late this evening. Once again, I say to the government and to the Leader of the House that I do not think it is necessary for the house to sit for hours of that nature. Personally, as I have said before, I do not mind the late nights. Although I find it tiring, I think that perhaps we do not set the best example for the rest of the community when we suggest that maybe people should not work long hours and then drive vehicles.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Can I just say that this will be the last late night we sit until we get to the budget process, when we have to sit later.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay. That is good advice, but it still strikes me as a little unnecessary. I have been told that the Premier loves hanging around Parliament at all hours. For some reason the Premier likes being here; therefore —

Mr D.A. Templeman: He doesn't have air conditioning at home. I hope Hansard got that; I thought it was very good!

Mr M. McGOWAN: For the record, the member for Mandurah said that the Premier has no air conditioning at home.

In any event, I do not think it is particularly necessary to sit late. I do not think that anything on the notice paper is so urgent that it needs to be dealt with this evening, and I do not think we are setting a good example, considering we are about to discuss road traffic legislation about safety on the roads, when we start work 16 or 17 hours before we drive home. I do not think that is a particularly good way of setting an example on road traffic issues in Western Australia, and I do not think there is any need for us to stay late. The Leader of the House says that how long we stay is up to the opposition. As everyone in this house knows, that is not true. How long the house will sit is up to the government. The Leader of the House can adjourn debates and he can adjourn the house at any time he likes.

This is the first session of Parliament this year and it is the third week of sitting. It is a bit unnecessary to have to stay late every night on each week of sitting at the start of the year's sitting. Obviously, at the end of the year when we have a lot of legislation that needs to be put through, people accept that that is a reasonable thing to do, but in the first couple of weeks of sitting I do not think it is particularly necessary for the house to act in that way. I do not think that there is appropriate justification for staying late. If the Premier likes staying late at Parliament and he enjoys sitting around this place, that is a matter for him. He can always sit here after we have gone home if he wants to, I suppose.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Or he could get an air conditioner.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, he could get an air conditioner at home. It is up to him.

Ms M.M. Quirk: He could get some friends.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He is the Premier of the state; he can buy some friends. God knows, he wastes enough money on different things; he can buy a few friends.

In any event, I do not think there is a great deal of justification for what the government is proposing. Although the opposition will not vote against it, I wanted to put that on the record, and I want to put the road safety message on the record loud and clear for the government as well.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [12.17 pm]: I will make a brief contribution. I think it is a little disappointing that our order of business sheet today is clearly wrong about what we will be debating today. Again, I think it highlights the lack of preparedness by the government in ensuring that the information is correct and accurate. In fact, we did not receive our “green”, as it is called, until the bells were ringing, only to find then that it was wrong and that the order of business for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting legislation is going to be debated tomorrow.

As the member for Rockingham has highlighted, I do not think the Leader of the House and certainly the government really know exactly what they are doing. This information is not worth the paper it is written on.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I’ll explain that in a moment. It’s unfortunate. There’s a new member of staff in that area.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Hillarys is the Leader of the House and he should be responsible for ensuring that this sheet is up to date. He has had most of the morning to ensure that this green piece of paper is correct and he has not done that; he has failed to present a correct one to us. I hope that the shabby way in which the house is being treated regarding the business of the day will be improved upon by the Leader of the House, because it is very, very shabby for us to be misled about what is going to happen without any explanation earlier on.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I’ll explain that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I hope so. I think the Leader of the House needs to explain himself.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I will do.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I hope so, because he needs to explain himself; and I hope it is good, because I think it is very shabby.

Mr M. McGowan: Can you explain the face slashing?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know members think I grizzle about how long it takes me to get home. One of the problems for members who live in their own electorate that is out in the regions, and who actually go home and do not collect the \$255 that some members collect, is that they have a long way to go.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Collie–Preston has a long way to go!

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Vasse has a very long way to go to improve his position and improve his status.

Apart from that, the thing is, yes, I did slash myself this morning in the darkness. I was bewildered; I did not actually know what time it was this morning when I woke up.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thought it was Thursday! I said to the member for Midland that I thought it was Thursday, so members are watching a fatigued man.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: If you stopped wasting time, we wouldn’t need to sit late.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I let the member go home last night—how rude, member for Eyre! I was very kind to the member last night: I let him go home early and now he is berating me. It is outrageous!

The fact is this is very shabby and the Leader of the House is being very shabby. I hope that we do not have the situation in which we are misled about what is on the agenda for debate for the day.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [12.21 pm] — in reply: I feel I should respond to the comments made. I am grateful that the opposition is not going to vote against this motion because this sort of motion comes up from time to time and very rarely is voted down. I cannot remember in history it ever being voted down. However, I will deal with the comments that the opposition Whip has brought up about the green paper that members opposite get.

That green paper is provided as a matter of courtesy; it is not an obligation. Members do not have to get that green paper, but obviously when we were in opposition we got it from the then government most of the time, not all of the time, and while we are in government I will ensure that the opposition gets it. The problem with the green paper today is that we have a new staff member in that particular section and that staff member has made a mistake—a human mistake. I think that the unkind, absolutely beastly comments made so far will not give that member of staff a great deal of confidence, so I will try to ensure that he realises that we do not blame him at all. As I speak, the green papers are being collected and members will —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You didn't check it!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I do not check what the opposition gets; I check what I get. Let us come to why we were late last night. Let us just come to why we are sitting late. It is because of the filibustering —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Because you're a windbag, that's why!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member certainly is not, because she was not here for half the night! The shadow Treasurer was not in this place for half of last night. She came in towards the death knell of last night and started asking questions from a printed sheet that her colleagues had already asked and had answered. We had to say to the member, "Read *Hansard* tomorrow and you'll get the answers." That is what it is —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You're an old and tired man!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: When the member has to start insulting people, she has lost any credibility in her argument.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: The sooner you go and retire, the better off everyone will be!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am too much of a gentleman to start criticising the member, her looks and everything else, I assure the member. The member gets away with this because that is the type of person she is. The member is a disgrace! She was one of the laziest ministers in the previous government and she is not working any harder in opposition. The member has put herself as a possible leader—she has not got a hope in hell! She has her own sideline along the front.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I am not taking an interjection from that person up there, I can assure members! He is a disgrace! He is an absolute judas! Nobody wants to sit next to the member for Cannington because he is so unpopular.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I am looking forward to having a dinner break this evening. I always need a dinner break and I am anxious to put this motion to the house. In fact, I am going to put this motion to the house.

Question put and passed.