

METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BILL 2011

Remaining Stages — Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [2.54 pm]: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 to proceed without delay between the stages.

This is not gagging debate. We are not bringing the bill on at the moment; it is so when we finish consideration in detail we can then go immediately on to the third reading stage. It is a very simple motion.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [2.54 pm]: What the government is proposing here is unusual. The metropolitan redevelopment authority legislation has been debated before this house and has the interest of a range of members because of impacts it might have on local governments or indeed their communities. A range of members on the opposition side have raised issues. I think some government members have also raised issues during consideration of this bill. Indeed, a number of opposition members have spoken on the bill and a number of members have been involved in the consideration in detail stage of debate. It was last, as I recall, before the house late into Tuesday evening. I do not believe it was on for debate yesterday, yet the government has now moved to suspend standing orders—just so everyone knows—so the bill can go between the stages. The reason the government thinks that is necessary is there are a range of proposed amendments to the bill. There are amendments on the notice paper by members of the opposition, namely the members for Perth, Armadale and Midland. In fact the member for Armadale has a redevelopment authority within his electorate. There are also on the notice paper eight amendments from the Minister for Planning that were not contained within the original legislation. We have to debate those eight amendments. We are now up to clause 65 or thereabouts. A number of these amendments are subsequent to clause 65, so we still have a number of amendments awaiting debate by the house.

The reason this is unusual, and the reason I am objecting, is that if we go to standing order 196 members will see that when an amendment is passed in the committee stages of a bill, it is not able to go forthwith to the third reading stage; it has to wait until the next day. I thought that rule contained in the standing orders—which is there for good reason and which has been adhered to in the past—is entirely reasonable. I have not had any argument put to me as to why we should overturn standing order 196, which is the agreed standing order of the Parliament of all members of this house. I have not had any reason put to me as to why we should overturn that, particularly when there is not just one proposed amendment, there are eight proposed amendments from the government and a number of proposed amendments from the opposition, which, who knows, the government might accept. All I am saying to the government is: we do not accept this. If there are amendments to the bill in the committee stage, then the standing orders deserve to be properly adhered to so members can consider their third reading speeches in light of the amendments passed and agreed to by the house. I think that is reasonable. We do not accept the government should be able to pass the bill through the stages without adhering to standing order 196 simply because it meets its convenience.

The management of the house is the Leader of the House's responsibility. I think what we have seen in the past couple of days is that he might be overburdened with responsibilities. I think it is a fair point. I mean this seriously: the Leader of the House is overburdened with responsibilities. We suggested by way of motion earlier today that the emergency services portfolio be removed from the Leader of the House and that he concentrate on the police portfolio; a big portfolio for any person in Western Australia. We have suggested that. For anyone who has performed the role of Leader of the House, as the member for Balcatta has, it is a huge demand. It requires a huge amount of time. Sometimes there are intricacies involved; sometimes management issues are involved; sometimes a lot of time is required to be spent in the chamber; and sometimes there is a lot of detail to get across. The Leader of the House seems to think that parliamentary debate is just an annoyance.

Mr R.F. Johnson: For you it is filibustering!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the House seems to think it is an annoyance and that members having their say—each being elected by 30 000 people or so—is somehow a waste of time. That is what we are here for. If members want to talk about history, I recall that when the Leader of the House sat on this side of the chamber a lot of words were spoken but they did not make a lot of sense. All I am saying is that the standing order that allows members to give proper consideration to amendments before the third reading stage should be allowed to stand. There is absolutely no necessity for that standing order to be suspended and overturned merely to meet the Leader of the House's convenience because he does not like members to have their say. The Minister for Planning has some important amendments. I think that of all people, the Minister for Planning would be a more appropriate person to fulfil the role of Leader of the House than the current Leader of the House. The Minister for Planning has more time on his hands, he is knowledgeable about the standing orders and he has the

propensity to fall asleep on occasion, which is not uncommon for a lot of members of this house, particularly when they are in the chamber.

Mr F.M. Logan: Or other leaders of the house.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Or other leaders of the house. It is not outside the usual practice. I believe that the member for Kalamunda is the entirely appropriate person to undertake the role of Leader of the House. We will not accept the suspension.

Mr C.C. Porter: I think you would make a good leader of the Labor Party.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think I would make a better Leader of the House. A lot of members opposite are nodding. The Treasurer is right about changing my role to Leader of the House. I think that is a sensible and good offer. We will just have to wait until the next election, when I hope I will get that opportunity. I do stay awake in this place a little more than the member for Kalamunda.

Let us go back to the central point. We are debating a motion to suspend standing orders about a matter that, in all honesty, is of little consequence today when we have been debating much more weighty issues. I suggest to the Leader of the House, particularly in light of his refusal to allow a full and proper debate of much more weighty issues today, that this motion is inappropriate on such a day. The opposition will not support this motion for the reasons I have stated and because the Leader of the House did not allow standing orders to be suspended to have a full and proper debate to consider the Leader of the House's performance in one of his more important roles in this state when he failed to properly exercise his duties as Minister for Emergency Services.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [3.02 pm]: Likewise, I oppose the motion. I am particularly concerned at what the government and the Leader of the House are attempting to do. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority Bill 2011 has been very strongly debated. It has been a most pleasant debate because the Minister for Planning is a wonderful minister to deal with on the intricacies of legislation. However, the government has a number of amendments on the notice paper, the most important of which relate to the representation of local government. After the opposition flagged to the minister during the debate that it would move an amendment, I was delighted that the minister moved an amendment to ensure that the affected local governments would be assured representation. That is a key issue that harks back to the criticism by local governments that the state government has not consulted with them about this bill. We are compounding that criticism by trying to rush the bill through the house. More importantly, I and the other members who are directly affected by this legislation were prepared to be in the chamber until past midnight on Tuesday to complete the bill. The Leader of the House knows that at sunset tonight Hon Liz Behjat and I are hosting the important end-of-Ramadan dinner for Iftar at Perth Town Hall. I will be absolutely ropeable if the Leader of the House is pulling a stunt so that I and other members of Parliament will be unable to attend this very important dinner. The Minister for Planning knows that one of the reasons we were trying to push this legislation through on Tuesday was that I have a very important briefing with Perth Institute of Contemporary Art this afternoon. We were supposed to sit late on Tuesday when the Leader of the House suddenly pulled a sickie at 11.30 pm because he knew that he would be receiving the Fire and Emergency Services Authority report the next morning. The Leader of the House wanted to get home to his slippers and Bovril and get a good night's sleep. More importantly, we were prepared to debate the bill yesterday but it did not come on for debate. We were prepared to stay late last night. Members were told that we would have a dinner break and then sit late last night to complete the bill, but the Leader of the House did not bring it on. The exalted position of Leader of the House has proven to be the petty fiefdom of the Leader of the House to suit his personal arrangements rather than the longstanding commitments of other members of the house. The opposition strongly opposes this motion.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [3.06 pm]: Members of this place are given notice of the legislation that is to be presented to the house. Ultimately, all members are notified by the Leader of the House or manager of opposition business. I am sure that the Leader of the House lets his members know via letter about the proposed order of business. The manager of opposition business similarly prepares his members for the coming week. On Friday, 12 August all members were notified via a letter from the Leader of the House about the proposed order of business. I have the proposed program in front of me. From 1.00 pm to 10.00 pm we were to debate the Duties Amendment Bill 2011 and the Premier's Statement, if time permitted. The most important part of the notification of the Leader of the House was the statement on the second page that the Leader of the House advised that the house would sit later than usual on Tuesday, which we did, although we did not sit as late as we had expected to, and beyond 7.00 pm on Wednesday with a scheduled dinner break from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm. We did not sit beyond 7.00 pm on Wednesday or have a scheduled dinner break from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm. Members on this side of the house were well prepared to debate the items listed for Tuesday night when we expected to sit after midnight, which is not uncommon. We also expected to sit beyond 7.00 pm last night. When private members' business concluded suddenly at 7.00 pm without any notice to the opposition, the Leader of the House adjourned

the house. That is what happened, which was contrary to the information provided to members by the Leader of the House via the notice he gave last Friday.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I told you we were not sitting late last night.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Leader of the House made it very clear that we would sit late last night. In preparation for that, opposition members made arrangements. As the opposition Whip, I made arrangements for members who had requested to be paired and told them that I might not be able to accommodate them because of the proposed later sitting. However, because of the mismanagement of the house by the Leader of the House, we are debating the suspension of standing orders to allow the minister to clean up the mess that he has made. It has not been a good day for the Leader of the House.

Mr R.F. Johnson: I'm not saying we'll finish this today. I think it is highly unlikely that we will, even if we sit till midnight.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is bad for the Leader of the House. This will be written down as a dark day for the Leader of the House. A dark day—very dark! We know it is a dark day for him. Maybe the press, the five o'clock electronic media and the radio stations will report it as the darkest day for him. The fact is that he has other responsibilities. Neither the Deputy Premier nor the Leader of the House would allow the house to debate the very important issue in our motion for a far more extensive period than the half an hour we were given. Now, of course, the mishandling of the business of the house by the Leader of the House demonstrates that it has been poorly planned, and there is an expectation that members on this side will accommodate that incompetence. I have allowed two ministers to pair tonight for what they have indicated are important meetings in Brisbane, which some could question are not necessarily government business but more of a political nature. But in good faith that has been agreed, and I will honour those pairs for the Leader of the National Party and the Deputy Leader of the National Party, as they are now on their way to the airport. Also, members from both sides are preparing to fly out later this evening on a delegation to China. I am assuming they will make a request of me to be paired.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You have put such a compelling case —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with the Leader of the House?

Mr R.F. Johnson: You are breaking my heart. You have put such a compelling case, if you sit down I'll seek leave to withdraw the motion.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am going to revel now in this backdown!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. Johnson: If you don't, it will stand; it's up to you.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Leader of the House, as I have said —

Mr C.C. Porter: Listen to the member for Mandurah or sit late. That is a tough call!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with the Attorney General? I thought there was something wrong; I thought he might have said I was a dill pickle or something! The fact is that members of this place are committed after 5.00 pm to a range of important engagements and have asked me, as Opposition Whip, if they can be paired, and, as I mentioned, I will honour that. We could be unpleasant and withdraw their pairs while those members are on their way to the airport, but I do not think that would be appropriate. The fact is that members have important engagements. The Leader of the House has tried to pull a stunt because he has got himself into a pickle, and I am highlighting why he should, perhaps, withdraw as he has proposed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: If members have business in this place at the moment I encourage them to stay here, but only if they have business in this place; otherwise they might take their conversations outside.