

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRECEDENCE OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [12.10 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, 6 April 2011.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [12.11 pm]: I want to make some comments in respect of this motion. Obviously, the opposition will support it, but I think it is important that we bring to the notice of the Parliament that we will once again be sitting late this evening. This is a pattern that has now been repeated over a number of sitting weeks. It seems that the government is having major difficulties managing its legislative program. It is very interesting that we seem now to have a standing motion each week to extend the business of the house into the Wednesday evening program. I remind members on the other side that it is important for them to speak to the Leader of the House about this pattern, because it is becoming very much a repetitive process. I speak as a regional member of this chamber who ventures home —

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Some members leave the chamber and are home in bed, sleeping soundly, within 10 minutes; some of us have to travel.

Mr J.H.D. Day: The only ones who do that are country members who have a place in the CBD!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Like the Minister for Health? What about the Minister for Planning's mate, who sits in front of him? He goes home and claims \$255 to sleep in his own bed! That is the reality. That was a very silly thing for the Minister for Planning to say; I would not have opened my mouth if I were him! If he opens his mouth, he is going to get smacked! Do not rouse me!

Mr R.F. Johnson: No, please don't rouse him!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I could easily use my full 58 minutes! Do not rouse me, Minister for Planning, because I will go through every member in the chamber who goes home and claims \$255 to sleep in their own bed, 10 kilometres from the CBD. Do not worry about that!

Mr P. Abetz interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Southern River should not open his mouth! We can all tell a few stories about him; we all remember the pole vaulting over the bar, so do not rouse me! Who is getting upset now? The Minister for Local Government is leaving, which is probably appropriate! He has spat the dummy, like the Premier did yesterday! Go on, off you go, member for Bunbury! Get out of the place! If you cannot stand the heat, get out of the kitchen, son!

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I find the comments very amusing, but they have nothing to do with the motion.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, I have given you the opportunity to reply to the motion before the house, and I expect that that is what you are doing. I know that there have been a few false starts and a few interruptions; it often happens in this place. I now simply ask you to return to the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Since this motion has been moved by the Leader of the House a number of times, he should make it a standing motion that we will sit late on Wednesday evenings until further notice, because a pattern seems to be emerging. I conclude by simply saying that the continual extension of Wednesday evening sittings is purely the fault of the Leader of the House and the government, and it demonstrates that it is not able to appropriately manage its legislative program. It is very sad that some members on the other side continue to attack the opposition by saying that it is our fault. Frankly, the opposition is doing its job, which is to hold the government to account, and we will continue to do so. If the government cannot get its act together in respect of its legislative program, it seems that we will continue to sit late on Wednesday evenings, as has been the pattern for a number of weeks. Last week the Leader of the House said that it would be the last time the house would sit late on a Wednesday, and he said the same the week before that. His track record is not good.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [12.16 pm]: I want to bring to the attention of members that once again, the business of the house will not be accommodated by the government. It is disgraceful that we are again sitting late this week.

There are some very important arts events taking place next Wednesday, and I do not yet know whether I need pairs for them. It seems we have an acting Minister for Culture and the Arts who is asking for pairs to go to arts events, and I do not know what is planned for next week. I am also very concerned that we are now devoid of the presence of senior government ministers. It is good that they are attending an important meeting with a high-level person from China. The irony is that they are missing in action when we should be debating the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Special Powers) Bill 2011, after the Leader of the House's stunt yesterday during question time, when I correctly drew to the attention of the house and the community that our relationship with China matters much more than the theatrics of CHOGM. The Deputy Premier and the government's senior ministers have today demonstrated that I was correct in acknowledging that our relationship with China is more important than Parliament and question time. What I object to is the government's mismanagement of time, which has resulted in us sitting late tonight. We moved Parliament from sitting during CHOGM because of the incredible disruption that we will have. The government can efficiently arrange a very important meeting with a most important visitor from China, but it somehow cannot do the same for CHOGM. Again, this reinforces the very points I made in my lengthy and measured article, and I thank the Minister for Culture and the Arts for publicising that article to the house yesterday.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Leader of the House) [12.19 pm]: I appreciate the cooperation of the opposition Whip. He has urged members on this side of the house to talk to me about why we are sitting late, so I think it is incumbent on me to suggest to members opposite that they need to talk to their manager of opposition business. The reason we are sitting late is that we are taking such a long time—not “we” collectively, but the opposition—in filibustering a bill that, I am told —

The SPEAKER: Members for Willagee and Girrawheen, I formally call you to order for the first time.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We sat late last night and we will have to sit late tonight because it is important to get the CHOGM bill through this Parliament.

Ms M.M. Quirk: If it's so urgent, why are we now sitting through two responses to the Premier's Statement, minister?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I do not think the member for Girrawheen will ever be on this side of the house again, so she will never have to be Leader of the House—I promise her. I do not think that will ever happen.

Mr M.P. Murray: No doubt your pre-selection is safe!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The member for Collie–Preston would never imagine in his wildest dreams that he would even be on the opposition front bench, let alone the front bench on this side of the house!

We are forced to sit late because of the intransigence and the filibustering of members opposite in relation to the CHOGM bill. If we get through that bill, we will not sit late in the foreseeable future.

Question put and passed.