

SITTING WEEKS - ALIGNMENT OF HOUSES

215. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Leader of the House:

Given that only two sitting weeks of the Council in the remainder of this session of Parliament coincide with sittings of the Assembly, and given the difficulties I am having in obtaining answers to questions from ministers in the other house, has consideration been given to aligning the sitting weeks with the other house?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for raising this question now and for raising it informally earlier with me today. I was not aware that the sittings of the two houses coincided on so few occasions this year. It had not occurred to me as an issue. However, we have just had an example in this question time in which a minister was not available, which is presumably because ministers in the other place take the opportunity to carry out functions in other parts of the state and are not available to address questions. I concede there is an issue. I thank the honourable member for raising this aspect of it. Now that the matter has been raised, it is something we will have to pay attention to because, clearly, it is much more difficult to get questions answered on time if ministers in the other house are away as a result of that house not sitting coincidentally with the Legislative Council.