

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [6.53 pm]: I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until a date and time to be fixed by the Speaker.

I thank our Deputy Clerk Mr Doug Carpenter for reading the Bill a third time. It was a particularly momentous occasion in his career. I thank all members for their assistance and help through the session. This session commenced on 1 May last year and the Government has introduced 109 Bills in that time. Sixty government Bills have passed into law as well as one private member's Bill, the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions (Asbestos Diseases)) Bill 2001. The Government has been able to pass into law a range of major reforms. Major legislative reforms include the Labour Relations Reform Bill 2002; the Criminal Investigation (Exceptional Powers) and Fortification Removal Bill 2001; the Criminal Investigation (Identifying People) Bill 2002; the Electoral Amendment Bill 2001; the Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2001; the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2001, which increases the maximum penalties for a range of offences committed against the elderly; the Royal Commission (Police) Bill 2002; the Criminal Code Amendment (Corruption Penalties) Bill 2002; the Motor Vehicle Dealers Amendment Bill 2001; the Machinery of Government (Planning and Infrastructure) Amendment Bill 2002; the Road Safety Council Bill 2002; the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill 2001; the Armadale Redevelopment Bill 2001; the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Acts of Terrorism) Bill 2001; the Sports Drug Testing Bill 2001; and the Zoological Parks Authority Bill 2001.

Unfortunately, 42 Bills are still bogged down in the Council. The Government will seek to restore those Bills in the spring sitting, and hopefully we can get a better performance out of the other place and get more Bills passed.

Since 1 May, there have been 1 922 Assembly questions on notice. The Government has responded to 1 847, or 96 per cent, of those questions. Seventy-five questions remain outstanding, of which 66 were asked in the last three weeks of sitting. It has been a productive parliamentary session, which would not have been possible without a lot of hard work and general cooperation of all members. I thank members on this side, including the Whip and all those members who have spoken today. I thank the manager of opposition business for the way in which, for the most part, he has cooperated with the Government. I thank all members on the other side who have contributed to the debate. Although I will not seek to judge the quality of that debate, without contributions from all sides the Government would not have been able to function. I also thank the Clerks and the attendants, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and all the Acting Speakers for the way their help has enabled us to effectively function throughout this parliamentary session. I hope that all members get the opportunity to take some time off during the short recess so that they can come back refreshed for the remainder of the year.

MR JOHNSON (Hillarys) [6.56 pm]: I thank all members on this side of the House for the tremendous work they have done to try to ensure that the Government is held accountable, open and honest. It has been an extremely difficult task, but we have done the best we possibly could. We have asked pertinent questions, although it is a pity that we did not always get appropriate answers, particularly when they were asked without notice; it has caused us some disappointment. The Government does not provide enough answers to those questions. We have tried to cooperate with the Government to ensure that legislation passed through this House.

During the first 17 months of the Labor Government, the Opposition has attempted to suspend standing orders far fewer times than the Labor Party ever did when it was the Opposition. The Labor Party did it on almost a weekly basis. We have attempted to suspend standing orders only when we thought there was a serious issue to debate. We do not wish to waste the time of the House, because it costs the taxpayer money for every hour this House sits. I was disappointed that on no occasion in its first session did the Government agree to a suspension of standing orders other than to accommodate a technical point raised by the Opposition. On behalf of the Government, the Leader of the House has not agreed to the suspension of standing orders on any substantial opposition motion that sought to hold the Government - particularly one or two of its ministers - accountable.

I do not want to keep the House any longer. It is now almost seven o'clock on a Friday evening, which is a day that Parliament would usually not sit. During the 10 years that I have been a member, Parliament has never sat on a Friday. We have done this to accommodate the Government, because it desperately wanted to pass its Labour Relations Reform Bill with the Council's amendments. The Leader of the House has commented on the number of Bills that have passed through this House. The Opposition considers the passage of the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Bill and the Labour Relations Reform Bill to be a retrograde step for the State. They are dreadful Bills that will not enhance the wellbeing of the overwhelming majority of the population of Western Australia. The Bills will be a disservice to the majority of Western Australians. They might help some minority groups, but they will not help the majority.

I take this last opportunity to thank Doug Carpenter, who has provided a tremendous service to this House. We all thought that yesterday was his last day, but it has turned out to be today. We are sorry to have kept him here,

but he can blame the Government for that. However, we were happy to come back to pass the Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Bill and the Home Building Contracts Amendment Bill. I wish Doug, his wife and family all the best for his retirement. I am sure that all members, especially those on this side, support me sincerely.

I thank all the Assembly and Hansard staff who have had to suffer many long hours - not just today - and sometimes through the night since the Labor Government came to power.

I thank you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Andrews), and those members who occupy the Chair, particularly the Speaker for whom I have a tremendous amount of time. It is a pity that he is not in the Chair at the moment so that I could say some more nice things about him. I thank all members of the House, not just those on this side who are my good friends. I have two good friends on the other side: the Minister for the Environment, who called me a friend at a citizen ceremony - I referred to her in the same way and I believe that we are friends - and the member for Swan Hills; we get on quite well together.

I wish every member of this House a happy winter break. I hope that the Leader of the House does not bring us back before six weeks. I know the House is recalled by notice of the Speaker, but I hope it will not be recalled before the diary date for the official opening of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 7.01 pm
