

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Ordinary

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [10.00 pm]: I move -
That the House do now adjourn.

Negotiations between Major Parties - Adjournment Debate

HON TOM HELM (Mining and Pastoral) [10.00 pm]: I will not keep the House for long. Not being in the Labor Party any more, I have no apologies to make to anybody. I ask the President, through the Chamber, to get the Leader of the House and the leader of the Labor Party together and sort out their differences so that we can get the Government's agenda rolling and have an opportunity to debate these matters. It reminds me of the proverb, "When the elephants fight, the grass gets hurt". It is like watching two unsophisticated bulls bouncing around in a china shop. I am not pointing the finger at either party, but at both of them.

I went to the workers' education socialist colleges in the UK when I was active in the union, and they taught me how to negotiate, the art of compromise and how to be pragmatic. I have learnt more since I have been in Australia, but I have not learnt much more since I have been in this Chamber. It is a shame that we dance around issues but we do not develop a way to deal with them. We have two people who have a strong personality clash.

Hon Tom Stephens: I would trust Hon Tom Helm with the task of negotiating on behalf of the Labor Opposition to get the Government to agree to bring on the select committee. Hon Tom Helm can negotiate with the Leader of the House on my behalf with my full authority towards that end and he can come back and report on how he got on with the other half of the bull.

Hon TOM HELM: If I had the authority that the Leader of the Opposition is supposed to have in this House, I would be happy to take on that task. It may be a little late in the day for things to change, but it is something that must be taken into account. Perhaps we cannot get the changes to take place, but after watching what happened -

Hon Tom Stephens: He needs brain surgery, he is pathologically unsuited to the task.

Hon TOM HELM: I might rest my case if the Leader of the Opposition continues talking. I do not think that what we are doing is in our best interests as politicians. If the Leader of the House were here, I am sure he would have something to say. The facts are that that is what we are faced with. There must be a way out of this impasse, and it must happen before 1 September.

Business Management Committee - Adjournment Debate

HON TOM STEPHENS (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [10.04 pm]: A business management committee was established but the Leader of the House has chosen not to use that, as Hon Helen Hodgson pointed out once before. This Leader of the House is pathologically incapable of negotiating with members of this House.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have watched him. I have known the bloke for 18 years, and I can tell members exactly what he is like. The House has never seen a more temperamentally unsuited Leader of the House. As a result of the way this leader has dealt with issues like the business management committee process and the process of trying to take on board other people's views on the way the House might simply accommodate -

Hon Muriel Patterson: Is this an Address-in-Reply speech or an adjournment debate?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: This is the adjournment debate. Is the member lost? The time is ten o'clock, and we move into the adjournment debate after ten o'clock. The reasons -

Hon Barry House: That is one standing order that the Leader of the Opposition has got right, but he has not got anything else right in the past two weeks.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Gee, the member is a funny bloke. I do not accept Hon Tom Helm's critique that this is a problem caused by two people. A business management committee process was established deliberately to try to bring about a resolution of the needs of the non-government side of this House which constitutes -

Hon Norm Kelly: And the needs of the Government members.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is right; it was also to be in the interests of the government members. That process has brought no joy to any members on this side of the House.

As a student of this place for a long time, I can tell members that what has happened has demonstrated the weakness of the standing orders. Some standing orders do not serve this House. When the Labor Party forms government it will be absolutely essential that, as part of being a House of Review, those standing orders serve

all members of the House. Other weaknesses exist in this place. We must have a House that champions the individual rights of members. That does not currently happen in this place. People have responsibility for ensuring that happens, but it has not happened.

Hon Barry House: That sounds like a reflection on the Chair.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am not taking it as a reflection on the Chair, but if the Leader of the Opposition intends it to be a reflection on the Chair, let him say it because I will then take whatever action I deem appropriate.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I can think, know and believe a lot of things, but I know that I cannot say some things, so I do not. I know the way this place operates, and we sit and watch it all day long. We sit and watch the games that people opposite play, the way people in front of us play the games. I can tell members that when we are in government, the standing orders of this place will be reformed. I commit myself to that process. I hope that other people in this place will also do that because this House needs to be a House of Review. The Government has not yet had to face a proper House of Review in this place.

Hon Greg Smith: How will the member reform it?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: There are a variety of ways of doing it, not the least of which would be to have a Leader of the House who chairs business management committees and shows some regard for the non-government members in this place. The Leader of the House is incapable of doing that.

Hon Barry House: You do your deals outside the Chamber.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It is a business management committee issue. I will go out of my way to assist this Government, and part of that process is making sure that the rights of individual members - opposition, minor parties and independents - are championed by the House, and that means all of us, including those who have special responsibilities for that to happen.

The will of this House has been made clear and previously resolved. The will of the House is that there be a select committee on finance brokers.

Hon Barry House: It is only because of your bungling that it has not come to fruition.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have sought the leave of the House. Come on. Listen. I will give the member an offer now.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. He should just calm down. He does not have to yell and scream. I can hear him. If he speaks to the Chair he will not have to yell -

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President -

The PRESIDENT: Order! Just come to order, and do not yell.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, I am happy to give the House an opportunity right now - to not adjourn - and bring the select committee motion to resolution. I am prepared to defeat the adjournment, if that is a serious offer that it be brought to resolution now, because I will make myself available.

There is silence from members opposite. I also want to mention that I have offered the Leader of the House an opportunity to bring this matter to resolution or, alternatively, to seek a majority of people on this side of the House who will oppose the special adjournment tomorrow night; that is, to return next week to advance the Government's legislative program as well as re-establish the select committee.

That is the offer I made to the Leader of the House tonight. How fairer can I be?

Hon Tom Helm: It is all a compromise.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am glad the member recognises how often I go out of my way to accommodate the Government. Members opposite have plenty of options. They could defeat the vote on the adjournment tonight and bring these matters to resolution.

Hon Greg Smith: And reinstate the Government's Bills.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: If the select committee is re-established, the Government's Bills will be back on the Notice Paper, pronto.

Hon Muriel Patterson: If we agree with you, you will accommodate us?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Absolutely. I believe in the rights of this House. The House decided a select committee should be set up. All I want to do is champion that decision and give the House the opportunity to put the committee back in place. Regrettably, this House does not function as well as it might. I have a number of weaknesses, of which members are aware, but they do not include an unwillingness to accommodate the Leader

of the House or try to reach compromises. I have gone out of my way to be kind and good to the Leader of the House. I have tried my hardest to assist the Leader of the House but regrettably, he has decided, for whatever reasons, to frustrate a previous decision of this place to set up a select committee and will not allow it to re-established.

Hon Barry House: It has not even be debated yet. You are talking rot.

Hon Simon O'Brien: The House also agreed to those six Bills.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: They will be restored to the Notice Paper as soon the select committee is re-established.

Hon Simon O'Brien: They have not been restored yet. You are holding us to ransom.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is the offer.

Hon Ray Halligan: You do not care about law and order.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I care about law and order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! One at a time, members.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Many people have been badly affected by the administration of the laws of this State, including those people caught up in the finance broking scandal, over which the Government presided. I care about those people and want to make sure this select committee is re-established in double-quick time to look after their needs.

Hon W.N. Stretch: You are a joke.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No, I share the concerns the community has about the needs of that industry and of the people who have been caught up in it. That is one of the reasons that I tell members opposite to ask the Leader of the House to find a way through this. He will find us quick to assist.

Restoration of Bills to the Notice Paper – Adjournment Debate

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [10.13 pm]: I sometimes have great concerns about the way people in this House conduct themselves. This House has a responsibility to the people of Western Australia in the way it conducts itself. The business of the House has been stalled this week. The Leader of the House has told the Leader of the Opposition how the House's business will be progressed. It has been made abundantly clear.

Hon Tom Helm has an opportunity to resolve this. All he has to do is vote the other way and we can get on with the job. It is as simple as that. The solution is simple: Restore the Bills to the Notice Paper and we can get on with debate. The Leader of the House has made it quite clear that the House will deal with the restoration of Labor Party's select committee when the House returns on 5 September so that tomorrow it can engage in some purposeful debating.

Hon Tom Stephens: Will it be restored on the same terms?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: There will be some slight differences, which have been arrived at after discussions with some of the other parties.

Hon Ken Travers: Do you want to revisit the debates we have already had?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: How many times have members opposite revisited this debate? The solution is clear and it is an opportunity to get on with debate. The Opposition and other parties should take notice of it so that we can do some meaningful work in this place.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.15 pm
