



Speech by

Hon. K. LINGARD

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard 30 May 2001

SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (11.30 a.m.), continuing: Before question time I was talking about the fact that, as a matter of courtesy, it has always been accepted that if a motion is to be moved generally that motion is distributed around the chamber. We have just seen a particularly long motion get passed which has been on the table for at least an hour, which has given us some time to look at it. There is no doubt that the significance of the motion moved earlier this morning by the Leader of the House—which concerns government business taking precedence tonight, a Wednesday night—would not be appreciated by many government members, unless there had been a discussion in caucus this morning. Not many people would have realised that government business was going to be brought on tonight and that a private members' bills session would not proceed. I say to the Leader of the House that courtesy should have dictated that her motion be distributed to all members.

I heard the Leader of the House state something about discussing this matter with me yesterday. The member for Gladstone and I have checked through *Hansard* to see whether anything along those lines was said yesterday. Certainly, nothing was said on the record. However, I do admit that outside this chamber yesterday, when we were having a general discussion on things, I thought the Leader of the House said that government business was going to be debated on Tuesday night and Thursday night. I accepted those two nights. If it was the case that she said Tuesday night and Wednesday night, I sincerely apologise. But I would have been particularly upset if the Leader of the House had said Wednesday night.

I do not know what the deputy leader and the Leader of the Opposition decided to do about motions and the business for tonight, but many weeks ago the Leader of the House and I discussed a particular document which stated—

Time for private members' bills will only be utilised if there are private members' bills able to be debated.

Then it said quite clearly—

If no private members' bills are available for debate, the House will adjourn at 7 p.m.

That means that the House sits for another half-hour and finishes at 7.30. It is clearly stated that if no private members' bills are available for debate, the House will adjourn at 7 p.m. The Leader of the House and I agreed on that point. But I would not have agreed to the concept that three private members' bills would sit on the table for 90 days while government business takes precedence on a Wednesday night. That was certainly not the intent of our agreement.

I have no doubt that when discussing the issue with the Deputy Premier and all of those on the Sessional Orders Committee previously, the Leader of the Opposition would not have agreed to three motions—that is, one per sitting day—being reduced to just one motion on a Wednesday morning and there being one debate on a Wednesday afternoon if there was any suggestion that the debate on private members' bills on a Wednesday night would be suspended and government business would take precedence. That is what we have been asked to agree to tonight.

I have read the sessional orders, and I heard the Deputy Premier's comment about the 90 days, and I admit that the position has changed. If 90 calendar days go past, then debate on a private member's bill must be brought on. But that does not overcome the fact that the Leader of the House and I agreed that if a private member's bill is available for debate it should be discussed. The member for Southern Downs wants to bring on his private member's bill, as do the members for Toowoomba

South and Nicklin. Those private members' bills will probably have to sit there for 90 days while we debate government business.

If the Leader of the House wants to make decisions on a Tuesday night, that is okay. I heard the banter between her and the Deputy Premier the other day about such things never occurring when he was Leader of the House. If the current Leader of the House wants to bring on government business on a Tuesday night and cop the wrath of her own backbenchers, who have to sit here until midnight on Tuesday night or 1 o'clock on Friday morning, then she can do so. That is her responsibility. But she should not take up opposition members' time, which is the time set aside for debate on private members' bills.
