

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT TRUST BILL 2023

Discharge of Order and Referral to Standing Committee on Legislation — Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [1.03 pm] — without notice: I move —

That the order of the day for the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023 be discharged, and the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration and report not later than 14 March 2024.

If people have familiarised themselves with it, this bill has been in force for some 37 years without significant amendment. It goes to the Western Australian Sports Centre Trust, and the proposed amendments go to the commercial, retail and promotional activities that are essential to the use of venues and precincts delivering sport, recreation and entertainment outcomes for Western Australians, and world-class training and competition venues for various sports. The government sees value in referring this to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [1.04 pm]: President, I nearly fell over with shock at the motion we just had before the house to refer something to the Standing Committee on Legislation. I hope that the legislation committee can find time in its busy schedule to examine this legislation. I hope that the hardworking committee enjoys its investigation, and I hope that this is the beginning of a new trend of the government referring legislation to the legislation committee to give it something to do. Congratulations! Let us see a bit more of it.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [1.05 pm]: I am gobsmacked by this. Let me see. President, can I just say a couple of things about this. Of course, we will support it. It will give the dire straits committee something to do. The committee members have been getting money for nothing for the last three years.

I do not mean to be flippant about this, but I cannot help but be flippant. The reason I am disappointed is that in normal circumstances, as the President is aware, I would have used the opportunity to bring down the government with the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023, but because Hon Samantha Rowe is one of my favourites, I was not going to do that. I was going to leave that for another occasion. Having said that, it has been an ongoing source of amusement around here that I have been waiting to deal with this bill for about the last three months. I have told the government on multiple occasions that it would take me 10 minutes, maximum, to deal with this bill and we will not go to Committee of the Whole. It is not an issue; it is an absolutely innocuous bill. It is making just a few refinements to VenuesWest et cetera. It is not a complex bill.

In a way, now I am thinking about it, I have to say that this is a bit disappointing because we are witnessing yet again the Labor Party's contempt for this chamber. The party is very exposed on the legislation committee—very exposed—because the Labor Party has not on one occasion during this term of government sent a bill to the legislation committee. That is a shame because, as long-term members will know, that committee does a really good job. It comes back with recommendations that get bipartisan support more often than not, and then that legislation has a seamless transition through the chamber. That has not happened this time. There have been multiple occasions when very complex legislation would have really relished and benefited from going to the legislation committee but has not gone there. For example, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill would most definitely have benefited from that, or the Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Bill, which we have just spent a week and a half with, would have benefited from it.

No; the government decides to put this piecemeal little innocuous legislation through to the legislation committee. I will be fascinated with the recommendations from this committee. I will be fascinated by the members of the community with whom the committee will ask to have hearings. I would love to find one person. I have a lot to do with the sporting community, I can tell you; sport is very much an essential part of my life. I do not know of one person or interest group that is remotely concerned about this legislation. It is just extraordinary.

I was staggered that the bill was not part of the legislation that the Labor government gave to the opposition to get through before Christmas. I said to Hon Dr Steve Thomas when we were working this out, “Look, mate, give me five minutes—10 minutes, max—on this bill. I will not go to Committee of the Whole; it needs 10 minutes maximum.” The government could have wrapped this up. Honestly, I would have stayed last night for another five minutes and got it through for the government; I would have. But, no, all of a sudden, the government has decided that the bill will go to the legislation committee. The government makes a mockery of this place. The Labor Party has neutered us because now we cannot go out and say that the legislation committee has not had any legislation. They will go, “Scoreboard! We have got the sports bill that we sent off there.” Do members know what I am going to do? I will sit in the public gallery and watch this. I will have a look at what this committee does with this legislation; I really will.

Hon Kate Doust: You can sub onto the committee, member.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Thank you, Hon Kate Doust. Hon Kate Doust is one of the few members of this chamber who can speak with authority on this issue because she has served on multiple committees and really values the

use of committee work. I have just come from working with our wonderful team on the hardest working committee in the chamber, the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations. We had a bit of a robust hearing today and it was great. Ultimately, that is the role of the committees. Not only that, we had an inquiry into homelessness. We have had multiple agency report hearings. We have had multiple hearings with various agencies. We do not stop working because that is the value of the committee system in the Legislative Council. But the poor old “Nelly and Nigel No Friends”, otherwise known as the Standing Committee on Legislation, do not do anything. They have done nothing, but all of a sudden they will have this arduous task to do, and that is to look at this innocuous bill. I notice there was not a reporting time on that, was there?

Hon Martin Aldridge: There is.

Hon PETER COLLIER: What is it?

Hon Martin Aldridge: It is 14 March.

Hon PETER COLLIER: You guys are going to have a whale of a time over the Christmas break! You really are going to have a whale of a time. We are about to rise. Let me just get this —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would like to bring the chamber back to some level of civility.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Let me get this straight. We rise in just over two weeks. I assume the committee will not sit after that. Remember we can go on long service leave for three months in the Legislative Council. We do not come back until the end of February. When will the committee hold its hearings? Will it have hearings? This is gobsmackingly amusing.

Having said that, I wanted to make the point that I am the shadow minister responsible for this legislation. I want it on the public record that I have stated consistently to the government that I will take 10 minutes, maximum, on this legislation. I will not cause the chamber to go into committee on this legislation. It is not required. The bill will effect some changes to VenuesWest and the board and that is all it is, and the government is sending it to the Standing Committee on Legislation. That is the amusing part of it. The serious part is that I really wish the government had picked a bill that was worthy of going to the Standing Committee on Legislation. I wish the government had picked a bill that could have been scrutinised and improved as a result of going to that committee, because this one will not be.

I will sit in amusement at the mass of recommendations that come back from that committee. Then, of course, as the fine legislator that I am, I will consider them and determine whether as a party and an alliance we will support them, because then and only then we might have to spend hours upon hours in the committee stage going through the recommendations of the committee. It would be laughable if it were not so serious. Suffice to say, as the shadow minister responsible, the alliance will support the referral but I just am really disappointed that the government chose this bill amongst the multitude of more complex bills to refer to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [1.13 pm]: I want to make a few remarks on the referral of the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023 to the Standing Committee on Legislation. The first thing I note is that we would have dealt with the bill in the time that we have dealt with the referral. Nevertheless, it is interesting. I listened intently to the Leader of the House speaking to this motion to refer the bill. I have lost count of how many motions to refer bills to the Standing Committee on Legislation have failed, but I think the primary defence of the government in objecting to a referral of a bill to the committee has been that, in its view, the mover of such a motion has failed to articulate the reasons for the referral to occur. I disagree with the assessment, but I do not disagree with the principle that value is added to the committee that is to consider these matters if there is some ventilation of the issues, the concerns, the potential problems and the risks that we would like the committee to specifically examine. Obviously, it does not curtail the committee’s ability to look at whatever it likes, but it helps guide it.

All I have heard from the Leader of the House today is that this will amend an act that has not had significant amendment for 37 years. That was it. So by the government’s own standard, by the government’s own test, this bill should not be referred. There is still time in this debate for another member of the government to perhaps better articulate than the Leader of the House’s articulation about why this bill should be examined by the Standing Committee on Legislation, particularly in the context of the remarks that have just been made by the shadow minister responsible for the bill.

Another thing that I would like to add is that in addition to the many bills that have been prevented from being considered by the Standing Committee on Legislation, including the Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Bill 2023, which is on the notice paper today, and I will have more to say when we get to the third reading, the government has denied motions moved by the National Party to establish select committee inquiries into natural disaster management in Western Australia and, just last week, into the shutdown of the native forestry industry in

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Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Martin Aldridge

Western Australia. The government has denied committee examination of those two very important matters facing Western Australia. But never fear; the government believes the highest order for a committee examination is the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023.

Question put and passed.