

HANSARD 18 NOVEMBER 2010
FRANCHISING BILL 2010 — REFERRAL TO ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY
STANDING COMMITTEE

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.35 pm]: The author of the Franchising Bill 2010, the member for Southern River, made a very important decision. He is a backbencher and does not have the resources of either a minister or a political party. He has looked very carefully at this bill. As members know, this is a private member's bill. The member has sought advice widely and has received a great range of advice. He and I, as members of Parliament, have received conflicting advice. There are pros and cons to the issue.

We have a committee system that is designed to improve legislation, as the member for Alfred Cove pointed out. One of the functions of the standing committees is to scrutinise legislation. The member for Southern River wants to get a bill through and has wisely asked for it to be sent to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee so that it can be improved. The member wants good legislation, not bad legislation. He has worked on it. We have all received submissions, for instance, from the Queensland Law Society, that raise potentially significant legal issues.

We should send the bill to the appropriate committee, which, according to the terms of reference, is the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. The member for Cockburn said that the committee is just a patsy that is meant to stall the bill. He is saying that the members for Cannington and Collie–Preston, who are the Labor members of the committee, are just stooges and mushrooms who are unable to express an opinion or scrutinise legislation.

The member for Cockburn is implying that as the chairman of that committee, I would dictate the will of the committee. If that is the case, why did the opposition refer the inquiry into domestic gas prices to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee?

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.M. Harvey): Order, members! Hansard has no opportunity to record this contribution on the very important issue before the chamber.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The government's motion proposes to send the bill to the committee and that the committee is to report by 26 May. The committee will do that, unless members opposite make it impossible. The committee has no intention whatsoever of postponing the reporting date of the current inquiry into domestic gas prices to later than 28 February.

The Labor Party moved the original motion to refer that inquiry to the committee. There is no desire to bury the Franchising Bill 2010. It will come forward and be rigorously scrutinised, I assume, by all members, including the Labor members of the committee, and we will vote on it.

The committee system is meant to improve legislation, and the author of the bill supports the motion to refer the bill to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. We are trying to make good legislation better. The motion to amend the original motion is an opportunity of the Labor Party, as usual, to make personal attacks and innuendo.

We are here to ensure that legislation is well drafted. A backbencher does not have the resources necessary to scrutinise all issues when putting together a bill. The Economics and Industry Standing Committee is the appropriate route. We would deal with it in an appropriate manner and get it to this house at the end of May next year.