

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS —
TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT — GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

579. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Minister for Finance:

I refer to paper 4829 tabled by the minister on Tuesday of this week.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that that document was the government's response, in accordance with standing order 191, to the recommendations in the twenty-sixth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs in regard to petition 145; that is, the petition about grain rail freight?
- (2) Did cabinet approve the response prior to the minister tabling it?
- (3) If no to (2), how was it determined that it was the government's response?

The PRESIDENT: Can I clarify first whether the minister was answering that question and tabling that document in his capacity directly as the Minister for Finance or on behalf of the Minister for Transport?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

Mr President, I have not seen this question. There was reference to all sorts of question numbers and committee reports and what have you. I think I better ask for the question to be placed on notice.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hang on! The sort of detail —

Hon Ken Travers: Two days ago!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I could have told the member the question two days ago. He expects to ask a question without notice about what happened to a question on notice 1, 2, 3 or 5 and what was the detail behind that. Get a life! Get real! If he wants answers, he has to go about it in a proper way. Is the member referring to a question asked of me in a representative capacity?

Hon Ken Travers: I'm asking about a document you tabled as the Minister for Finance.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Put it on notice, you twit.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I was trying to establish whether it was a document tabled by the minister in his direct portfolio capacity or whether it was in a representative capacity.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am happy to answer that question, Mr President. It was the government's response to the committee report. The Minister for Finance is the person who is responsible for providing the response on behalf of the government. It is not about representing anyone; that is the point of my question. Was he providing it as a document on behalf of the government in accordance with standing order 191, which requires a government response to be tabled? The minister tabled it, so I am asking whether, when he tabled it, it was the government's response. He was doing that as a minister in this place.

The PRESIDENT: If there is nothing to add to that, I think the minister has answered it by saying he will take it on notice and provide the member with an answer as soon as possible.