

GOVERNMENT ADVISERS

Statement

HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral) [5.18 pm]: I would like to make an observation. During my time in this chamber, I have witnessed Hon Stephen Dawson being grilled, barbecued and roasted on three separate occasions. The first time was with Hon Michael Mischin and the second time was with Hon Nick Goiran. Both members had every right to question the minister. What amazed me was the calibre of the advisers. If this is the calibre of advisers the previous government used, it would explain —

Point of Order

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I do this reluctantly because I appreciate that this is a new member in this house, but it is not customary that we would refer to the advisers because the advice is through the minister. I ask the President to assist the new members in that regard.

The PRESIDENT: I think I will. You are right, Hon Donna Faragher, it is not customary practice to make comments about the advisers who assist ministers, particularly at the committee stage of a bill's progress. If you want to comment, I suggest that you take up any concern privately with the relevant minister. Members in the past have not sought to make public comment about the capacity or the ability of advisers. I say that to you to perhaps assist you as you move on with your statement.

Statement Resumed

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Understood, Madam President. I finish by saying that I think they also assisted with this latest budget.

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think that the way the honourable member just concluded his response is inappropriate and I ask him to think about whether he would consider withdrawing those remarks. I ask him to do that because although he might have a point of view, which he is entitled to, the public servants that assist Parliament are unable to defend themselves if we start attacking them. If the member has an issue that he wants to place on the public record, he can do that about one of us. We are big enough and ugly enough to take it. But I would ask him to consider withdrawing his comments, because we really would not want to go down the path of attacking people who are doing their very best to assist all of us in Parliament through the minister and who have no right of reply, whereas we have a right of reply.

Hon ROBIN SCOTT: Madam President, the Leader of the House is correct and I will withdraw my comments. However, I will be writing to Hon Stephen Dawson.