

ESPERANCE PORT AUTHORITY

91. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does Esperance Port Authority currently have —
 - (a) a permanent chief executive officer;
 - (b) a chairperson?
- (2) Has the minister received a request from Esperance Port Authority to approve the appointment of a new chief executive officer; and, if so, approximately when was that request received?
- (3) Why have no appointments been made to these important positions?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for his interest in these matters. I do not know why the member is incapable of giving some notice when he wants to —

Hon Sue Ellery: He doesn't have to! You're supposed to be across your portfolio!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Oh! Is this the theme of the day? Is this the theme of the day, dopey? Is this the best the member can come up with?

Hon Ken Travers: If is it, it's working, isn't it!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: No, the member is not working.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! We are nearly coming to the end of questions without notice. I am hoping that the minister will get to the point of his answer.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, I will be delighted to do so. But, before I get to that, I was trying to point out by my remarks—as a courtesy to the member asking the question—that if the member wanted to facilitate the obtaining of information that he is dinkum about obtaining, he can as a matter of course provide some notice when he is asking for dates and all the rest of it. However, that seems to have been shouted down. That shows that the member is more interested in jumping up and down than serious debate. In relation to the member's nefarious little plan that he is so smugly clever about, I can advise him —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I can advise him as follows —

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hang on! Does the member want me to answer his question or not?

Hon Ken Travers: Yes.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Then the member should tell his dopey mates to shut up for a minute, and I will!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon ED DERMER: Mr President, I nearly rose to my feet at the reference to “nefarious”, but that was then combined with “dopey”. I think both those terms are highly unparliamentary, and I would seek a withdrawal and an apology from the Minister for Transport.

The PRESIDENT: Quite frankly, I think that is drawing a long bow. If any member takes offence at that particularly, that member might stand and ask for it to be withdrawn, but I do not consider either of those terms unparliamentary.

Hon ED DERMER: Mr President, if I had not taken offence, particularly at the reference to somebody being “dopey”, I would not have stood, so I certainly do take offence at both those terms.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am not going to take a point of order, because we have to have some room for some robust debate and neither of those terms is outlandish in my view. However, it is the convention that if somebody particularly takes offence, that member can invite the member making those statements to withdraw them if the member wishes. Hon Ed Dermer has requested that the minister withdraw it, but I am not going to insist on the request if the minister does not wish to withdraw it, because I do not consider those terms to be over the edge.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Mr President, I think you are very wise, but for the record and for the member's sensibilities, it was a tongue-in-cheek reference using the adjective "nefarious" to a quite inadequate plan being put forward by Hon Ken Travers. But if the honourable member is upset by something like that, I will withdraw it to save his feelings and out of respect for standing orders.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: In answer to the question, the fact is that both the positions of the chief executive officer and the Chairman of the Esperance Port Authority are in a process of transition at this time. The position of the CEO became vacant sometime ago. The board has undertaken an exhaustive process to identify a successor. I believe there are a very large number of applicants. I will not go into the exact details. Before the member jumps up and down, it is not because I am not across my portfolio but because these are other sensitive personnel matters. A very large number of applicants were considered. Ultimately, a recommendation has been made to me by the port authority board, which I have received, and I have recommended that to the cabinet.

Hon Ken Travers: Approximately when did you receive it—approximately, not specifically: months ago or weeks ago? I heard it was months. That is why I am checking.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It was weeks ago. There are processes to go through and those processes are being gone through at this time, so I cannot give any further information about that. The question of the chairman's position is also one that is under active consideration. But know this: as we have already demonstrated during our time in office, our ability to deal with issues related to the Esperance port is substantially better than anything that has been shown by our predecessors. Does that answer the question enough for the member?

Hon Ken Travers: It answers it beautifully.