

**CORONAVIRUS — ECONOMIC RECOVERY — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

*Statement*

**HON ROBIN SCOTT (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.39 pm]: I rise to respond to the member's statement that was made by Hon Tim Clifford last week. He was absolutely outraged that the Prime Minister was going to enthusiastically back a gas-led recovery. This recovery was being led by the National COVID-19 Commission. It just so happens, according to the honourable member, that the commission is "stacked with a lot of oil and gas executives". He went on to say —

... economists and many scientists —

Not all scientists, just many scientists —

in this world are also talking about the transition that we need to head towards. That is a transition to renewable energy—not gas, not coal, but renewable energy and battery storage. These are the things we need to head towards.

He does not have an argument about that with me at all because I have grandchildren and I want to ensure that the air is good and the environment is healthy. I do not want them walking around with aqualungs. At the moment our renewable energy technology is at the Ford Model T level. Until we can improve it, it will be a while before we can rely on it. At the moment it is very unreliable. Being a great advocate for renewable power, I have no doubt that the honourable member has a 6.5 kilowatt solar array system on his roof, along with a battery backup. I wish he were here.

**The PRESIDENT:** Member.

**Hon ROBIN SCOTT:** Sorry. I suggest that when the member goes home tonight, he turns off the main switch in his house. Before he hears that switch going click, the electronic inverter will have already switched over. He will not see any change in his house. I can guarantee that he will probably have power for two or three days, provided he does not use his washing machine or dishwasher. If he turns off his pool pump and makes sure he does not use any air conditioners, he will be able to use his laptop and watch television. If he does that, the first two cloudy days we get, he will be reaching for that switch. This is when it proves that it is unreliable. We cannot rely on renewable power.

Hon Tim Clifford went on to say —

It is absolutely shocking that the Prime Minister is fronting up taxpayer dollars to subsidise a gas-fired power station that will potentially be a stranded asset. That is disgraceful in my view. It is outrageous. It is fascinating that no-one in this place is speaking out against this. This is taxpayer dollars. It is absolutely disgraceful.

They are powerful words, and big words as well—absolutely shocking, disgraceful, outrageous and absolutely disgraceful!

We spent \$750 million—taxpayers' dollars—at the Collgar wind farm. At four o'clock on 4 February 2019, I was flying back to Kalgoorlie. The temperature in Kalgoorlie was in the high 40s, while Perth's temperature was in the high 30s. As I flew over the wind farm, I looked down and not one single turbine was turning. I did an orbit because I could not believe it. When Parliament resumed after the summer recess, the first question I asked was how much power it was putting out. Madam President, it was probably putting out enough power to put the light on in your fridge. This is how unreliable a wind farm is when we do not have any wind. There are 111 turbines out there, by the way.

The member went on to say that the government is using \$52.9 million of funding to unlock more gas for the domestic market. We need more gas because industry is growing at the moment. The member continued —

- Australia's existing pipeline of 22 gas projects, along with identified and prospective gas resources, could emit up to three times the annual world emissions.

That is crazy.

I will tell you what is crazy, Madam President. If we shut down these 22 gas projects, the industrial world will slow down dramatically. There will be mass unemployment everywhere. Third World countries will grind to a complete halt. People will chop down trees so they can cook their dinner at night. This is why we still need to have gas and coal. Renewables can help at the moment but that is all they will be doing—helping.

I am trying to think how I can put it. If we look at a goldmine, that is like a small town or a small city. The production area is the industrial area. The accommodation village is the suburbs. We even have our own Water Corporation because we have to generate water by pumping it out of the ground and we have our own Synergy because we generate electricity.

I refer to the Gold Fields Granny Smith goldmine. I went there in 1988 with a team of electricians. They had six 2.3-megawatt generators, which were capable of just under 14 megawatts of power. The goldmine had a life span of between five and seven years, but it is still going now 32 years later. Last year, it was announced that it would be going for another 13 years. It has got rid of the generators and gone to gas. The company paid millions and millions of dollars to get the Murrin Murrin to Tropicana gas pipeline to the Granny Smith goldmine and it now has the capability of 36 megawatts of power. That is how much the goldmine has grown just like any town, village or city grows all the time. It has cost the company an absolute fortune—hundreds of millions of dollars—to get the gas, the new pipeline, the generators—everything. If renewable power is so efficient and so cheap, why would it waste time buying 24 1.5-megawatt generators and spend hundreds of millions of dollars getting a gas pipeline if it could do it with renewables? At the end of the project, there will still be renewables. Do members know why it could not sell the solar panels and the wind turbines? It is because at the moment renewable power is totally unreliable and here in the metropolitan area we need reliable power.