



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS

New South Wales Labor Government

SPEECH

Tuesday, 12 March 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 12 March 2013
Page 1437
Questioner
Speaker Brandis, Sen George

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator BRANDIS (Queensland—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (15:03): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Senator Bob Carr) to a question without notice asked by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (Senator Abetz) today relating to ministerial conduct.

Australia is entitled to be assured that its senior representative on the international stage is a respectable and credible person. Putting political differences aside, nobody could doubt that Mr Kevin Rudd, when he was the foreign minister, was a respectable and serious person. Nobody could doubt that his predecessor as foreign minister, Mr Stephen Smith, was a serious and reputable person. But I am sorry to say that the current foreign minister, who likes to posture and present an urbane face to the world, is not, on inspection, a serious and reputable person. All that glisters is not gold, and, although Senator Bob Carr is so intellectually vain that he even wrote a book about how many books he has read, when you look at Senator Bob Carr's record as a public figure in New South Wales, and when you consider the response today in the Senate when he was taken to task for it, that record is one of shame and disgrace. This is what his successor as the Labor Premier of New South Wales, Mr Morris Iemma, said yesterday:

It took Eddie Obeid 20-odd years to build the power and influence he had and for 17 of those Bob—

that is, Senator Bob Carr—

was leader.

He said further:

Well he made him a cabinet minister and not only did he make him a cabinet minister, he waltzed into the caucus room when the vote was happening and very publically voted for him. To send a message that, 'Not only am I gonna vote for Eddie, but here, look at this, all of you should vote for him as well.' And why was he made a cabinet minister? For services rendered and support given.

Those are not the words of a Liberal politician. Those are the words of Mr Morris Iemma, Senator Bob Carr's successor as the Premier of New South Wales.

Such was the cesspit of corruption in New South Wales politics during the time of Mr Bob Carr's premiership, such was the Sumerian gloom into which that state had descended when he led it, that counsel assisting the ICAC inquiry before Justice Ipp, which is sitting in Sydney at the moment, described it as 'the most corrupt government of New South Wales since the Rum Corps'—again, not a politician, not a political opponent, but the QC assisting the Ipp inquiry.

The person who presided over that corrupt government—the person who fostered the political career of the source of the corruption, as we now know, Mr Eddie Obeid—was none other than Senator Bob Carr. Senator Carr might mock his accusers on the floor of the Senate today and he might mock the President of the Senate, who seeks to call him to order, but one thing he cannot escape is the stain on his reputation: that he, Senator Bob Carr, as the Premier of New South Wales, presided over the most corrupt government of New South Wales since the Rum Corps and that he, Senator Bob Carr, promoted, fostered, advanced and protected the political career of Mr Eddie Obeid, in the words of Mr Morris Iemma, 'for services rendered and support given'. That is Senator Bob Carr's legacy, and all the honeyed words, all the courtly phrases and all the intellectual grace and charm which Senator Bob Carr affects with all the credibility of a kabuki actor cannot conceal his record, now exposed for the public of New South Wales and the public of Australia to see: that corruption flourished like a forest plant under Senator Bob Carr's premiership. This, embarrassingly, is the face Australia now presents to the world.