

ESTIMATES HEARINGS — QUESTIONS TO DEWR (2)

Contrary to Senator Abetz's suggestion at the hearing this afternoon I did *not* say, or even imply, in my earlier advice that taking questions on notice is the equivalent of refusing to answer them.

On the contrary, in the first paragraph of the advice I recorded that the questions concerned had been taken on notice. I then recorded in the second paragraph: "*At an early stage of the discussion it appeared* that there was a refusal to provide any figures which are not included in the budget papers [emphasis added]". There was no "misunderstanding" on my part, and I do not think the advice could be misunderstood by any reasonable reader.

I again emphasise that this advice is not in any way subjective; it is based on the past resolutions of the Senate. I add again that I am bound to give the same advice unless and until the Senate expressly repudiates the resolutions which it has made over many years.