

30 May 2023

FF Plus: Dr. Mulder

Debate on Vote 2: Parliament

All the speakers that spoke after the speaker this afternoon reminded us at the house that we've got an election next year. There is no doubt we are in the fourth year of this term so it's quite clear when you listen to all the colleagues that they've got the election in mind. It is not a bad thing, that's politics, this is what the house is about sometimes. But technically I'm supposed to speak about the institution of Parliament, that's what it's supposed to be. Now if you look at Chapter 4 the Constitution and specifically at section 4 -2-3 it clearly states what we are supposed to be; the National Assembly is elected to represent the people and ensure government by the people under the Constitution; that 's what we are supposed to do.

If we sometimes forget, each and every member around this house represents approximately 50,000 South Africans out there. We should never forget about that responsibility. Then the Constitution goes on in section 43 and says the legislative authority of the national sphere of government is vested in this Parliament. We are the highest legislative authority on the national sphere of government. That placed a huge responsibility on Parliament as an institution.

Now what we have is, we bring together here people that represent the people on the one hand there and on the other hand it is all about power. We have to have power to do things and to act. My colleague from the EFF just mentioned all the legislation that was introduced and I respect that. That's private legislation, you need political power to implement that and to get those through. And that goes for all the parties and we understand that. That's why politics is about political power.

The fire that happened on the 2nd of January in 2022 was an absolute catastrophe. We came through a very difficult period after Covid which had a huge impact on the functioning of this institution and when at last we got through that process then the parliamentary buildings were destroyed in that terrible fire. And I believe it was a very very serious security lapse. The Hon Speaker will remember many years ago when she was still the chief whip, I had a point which I was pushing along and I still feel very strongly about it; that Parliament should have its own security. Let's call it a security force or security responsibilities or whatever you want to call it.

That takes full responsibility for the security of parliament and that authority should report to the executive of Parliament. What happened that specific evening, all of the police were supposed to look at the building which is not their first priority, they are looking at the perimeter and the gates. And what happened in the end I think, that should be corrected once and for all - that Parliament takes responsibility for its own territory ...etc.

I want to spend one minute on the section-194 enquiry and I think it's historic, it is the first time in the 30 years since 1994 that you are going through that process of a section 194 enquiry. And I know it's been going on for more than six months and the colleague from the IFP mentioned the financial

constraints. No, the financial things should not be the problem of Parliament . The Constitutional Court said that the Public Protector should have legal representation, they definitely did not mean that she should have the most expensive legal representation in South Africa. That was not what was meant. I think they perhaps meant she should have good legal representation and that's the case that's a different question altogether.

But the fact of the matter is if you look at the amount of money already spent on the defense for the Public Protector I think the time has come that somebody should give her the telephone number of the legal aid board. I think she can do very well going there like all South Africans. She does need what is happening at the moment. What should happen, she won't like that but that is what should happen at this stage. We will not, can not, allow Parliament to be held to ransom, it will not happen. This inquiry cannot go away and with all due respect, the allegations that are being thrown around at the moment, I personally believe that is just a further delaying tactic that we must not even deal with and just conclude this process as soon as possible.

I want to conclude by saying thank you to the staff of parliament, the new secretary of Parliament who has been almost a year now in the new position. Mr George, everything of the best for you in terms of trying to turn this institution around. I think we all hope that we can get to the point as soon as possible where we will once again have a functional parliamentary building and the whole precinct will be functional so that we can proceed and do what we're supposed to do.

All the staff that has made this possible under these impossible circumstances to continue with Parliament after the Covid situation, and the fire, I think we do not say thank you enough to the parliamentary staff, all of them, and then last but not least obviously the media. We don't see them anymore but they are following what's happening here without them reporting on what's happening at Parliament, people will not even take notice of what we are doing. Thank you.