

Wallace under fire over fingerprint evidence in Scotland

SCOTLAND'S Justice Minister Jim Wallace is being accused of undermining confidence in the criminal justice system after he appeared to cast doubt on the total accuracy of fingerprint evidence.

He made the comment as he tried to reassure MSPs that fingerprint evidence being presented in court was credible.

The Scottish National Party has criticised the remark and described it as making a mockery of the criminal justice system.

The row centres around comments which the Justice Minister made while appearing before MSPs on the Scottish Parliament's Justice committee.

He was asked by members of both committees whether he had any concerns about fingerprinting in Scotland.

Mr Wallace said that independent checks on fingerprint evidence were no longer considered necessary and that he believed that was a step forward.

After being pressed on the issue, he said fingerprinting was not an exact science. But he stressed that the Crown was satisfied that the evidence being presented in court was credible.

His comments have been seized upon by political opponents who believe that there are issues which need to be addressed in the light of the Shirley McKie case.

The former Strathclyde Police detective was wrongly accused of perjury when her fingerprints were said to have been found at a murder scene. She was acquitted after the evidence against her was discredited.

This article:

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