



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 5 October 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Chief Hansard Reporter

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.43 a.m.), by leave: I rise to speak with some regret today, because we bid farewell to the "Prince of Pitman", Alan Watson. Alan will retire tomorrow after 25 years of service to the Queensland Parliament.

Alan's career began well before he came to this place. In 1961 he was a clerk grade 3 in the Office of the Commissioner of Police and the following year was working with the State Reporting Bureau. He did two stints in Vietnam and in 1967 was discharged from national service. The following year Alan joined the Commonwealth Hansard team and, for his sins, spent a number of years in Canberra. That is service beyond the call of duty.

Alan returned to Brisbane in 1972. I am advised that he came back with a rather flash metallic blue Ford Mustang convertible. We would all love to have seen that. What style! He came back to the State Reporting Bureau and, subsequently, the Parliamentary Reporting Staff. He was appointed Deputy Chief Reporter in 1989. Alan took over the Chief Reporter's role following the untimely death of Peter Rohl. Mr Rohl had overseen the introduction of CAT—computer-assisted transcription—reporting and Alan Watson continued that good work.

Alan Watson commands great respect, Mr Speaker, as you know, for his professionalism, his dedication to the job, his diligence, his unflappable demeanour and his endless patience with all of us. He is regarded with some awe for his ability to make out what is being said on the floor of the House, despite the brouhaha that sometimes ensues—with no disrespect to you of course, Mr Speaker.

Mr Mackenroth: Members read their speeches and think they actually made good speeches.

Mr BEATTIE: Not only do members read speeches and think they made good speeches; Alan has actually managed to convert some speeches into English, which I find an extraordinary achievement. Some of the speeches I have heard have only made sense when I have read them in Hansard.

Alan has always been patient in his dealings with members and their officers and firm in his resolve when confronted with a request to rewrite history perhaps a little more eloquently than it was in fact created. It must also be said that frequently he had a gift for understanding what members really meant to say—and I for one have benefited as a result. My staff and I have always enjoyed an excellent working relationship with Alan, and I thank him for that. Alan Watson is also greatly appreciated for his quips and his dry sense of humour.

During his time in this place Alan has worked with nine Speakers: Houghton, Muller, Warner, Lingard, Powell, Lingard again, Fouras, Turner and Hollis. He has recorded the words of six Premiers: Bjelke-Petersen, Ahern, Cooper, Goss, Borbidge and me. There is no doubt that he will be missed in this place.

I wish Alan a long and happy retirement with his wife, Bev, his daughter and grand-daughters. He now has more time to devote to decreasing his handicap on the golf course, where I believe—

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I believe on the golf course he is known as "Why me?" He will now have more time also to travel the world and even, I am told, indulge in a little rock and roll dancing. I have to see

that! I extend my very best wishes to Alan Watson. I will move that my statement be noted in order to give the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to say a few words.

In addition to what I have said I say to Alan, who is in the gallery today: you are well regarded. You have run a very professional operation here. It is rare, I have to say, that people get the respect not only of both sides but also of every member in this Parliament. People get that only when they are good, and you are good. Good luck. I move—

"That the statement of the Premier be noted."
