



Speech by

**Hon. V. LESTER**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Hansard 16 May 2000

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Death of Mr R. Jones**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel—NPA) (2.48 p.m.): As one of those who did serve with the late Ray Jones, I do believe it was a privilege. I really want to say that. Our leader has spoken of his earthy language. When I came here many years ago for the first time, he was one of the first fellows I ran into. He looked me up and down in his little way and he said, "This place will test you out, mate." He said, "It won't matter whether you played football or what you've done; if you're any good you'll be here a long time, and if you're no good you'll be a oncer." I did not know what the word "oncer" meant at that time. I had to ask somebody, and I learnt. Then he looked at me and said, "I think you might be here for a while, somehow." I am very pleased that he was right in that particular instance.

I remember very clearly the good times that we had back then. In those days we used to stay at the Bellevue Hotel. People from all political parties would sit around there at night and have a yarn. Those were pretty good days. It was a bit different from the way it is now, with everybody getting stuck into everybody else in this Chamber. In those days we would sit around and talk; we enjoyed ourselves. It was a pretty happy time. Politics were forgotten—that is why it was so enjoyable—and then we would come into the Parliament the next day and have as good a stoush as we have these days. A certain Premier who was in office at the time would stir up the Opposition members and they in turn would stir up the Government members. I think Tom Burns was a member at that time. Members can imagine the ruckus in this Chamber back then, but outside this place at the Bellevue the members got on really well. People were very open. I give Ray Jones a lot of the credit for that.

I will not repeat all of the good things that others have said about Ray; I will simply say that I agree with them. We have seen the passing of a very honourable man who made a great contribution to Cairns and to the State of Queensland and a most magnificent contribution to this Parliament.

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