



Speech by

KERRY SHINE

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Hansard 18 June 2002

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE—DEATH OF MR W. R. J. BOUSEN, MP

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (10.05 a.m.): It is an honour to rise as the current member for Toowoomba North to support the motion of condolence on the death of William Raymond James Bousen, known as Ray, who was born on 13 January 1911 in Toowoomba and died on 28 May this year at Coolum. He is survived by his two daughters, Shirley Grayson and Norma Walker. His funeral was held at the St James Anglican Church at Toowoomba on 4 June. The eulogy was given by Peter Chippendale, the chairman of Ray's branch and his campaign director. Ray was born in Toowoomba on 13 January 1911. He was the fourth of nine children. He attended the Toowoomba North State School but left at the age of 13. I note that the Premier has remarked that he then attended the Toowoomba Technical College, no doubt at night. He regretted not having had more education but was philosophical and often said that his education really started when he left school.

It was thought natural for Ray to enter the employ of Queensland Railways, as his father had been a member of the Australian Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association. He commenced service with Queensland Railways in 1925 at Murphys Creek. He was then moved to Cooyar on railmotor service. It was at Cooyar that he met his future wife Doris, called Dorrie. In the 1920s he became the Secretary and Treasurer of the Australian Railways Union sub-branch in Toowoomba. He would have been still in his late teens. In 1945 he was a railway guard at Toowoomba and at that time was his union's delegate to the Brisbane state administration. He was also president and campaign secretary of his ALP branch. In 1953 he resigned from the railways and became the full-time secretary for the south-western division of the ARU sub-branch in Toowoomba. He was also Secretary of the Toowoomba Trades Hall and Labour Council and president of its board, as has been referred to by the Premier. He was a union delegate to the state ALP.

Ray joined the ARU in the turbulent mid-1920s, at about the time the ARU either left or was expelled from the Labor Party. He was an active member during the bitter strike of 1948 and a full-time official during the 1956 industrial troubles preceding the Labor split. He worked with the legendary secretaries of that union—Moroney and Nolan. He knew what unions were about. He knew what Labor politics was about. Ray joined the ALP in about 1930 and was made a life member in 1978. In 1969 he succeeded the former Leader of the Opposition, Mr John Duggan, in the then seat of Toowoomba West. He was a prolific doorknocker. Many residents of Toowoomba North still relate to me quite often the fact that he visited them in their homes. He puts a burden on the current member to repeat the effort from time to time.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SHINE: Thank you. As the member for Toowoomba West in the state ALP opposition, he was the shadow minister for land and forestry. As the Premier said, in terms of his achievements during his parliamentary term, he was very proud to have been responsible for the establishment of the preschool at Harlaxton and the special school at Gladstone Street. He lobbied vigorously for the establishment of a high school at Wilsonton, the first of about half a dozen to do so. He was defeated in the anti-Whitlam landslide in 1974. Ray was a devoted member of the congregation of St James Anglican Church and also supported and attended St Albans. He was heavily involved as a member of the West Toowoomba Bowls Club.

As well as the community and sporting bodies mentioned by the Premier and by the Leader of the Opposition, Ray was General Vice-President of the Queensland Sub-normal Welfare Association and was active in the Red Cross Society, Toowoomba Rugby League and Soccer. He took an active interest in the Toowoomba Marching Girls Group and was state secretary of the Queensland Marching Girls Association and subsequently was made a life member of the Australian Marching Girls Association.

His wife Dorrie died in July 2001. I met Ray at the funeral, and it gave him a great deal of pride to know that his old seat was again in Labor hands. Ray will be remembered as a man who had great faith in his family, in his church and in the Labor Party. Ray was a person who, if presented with somebody's problems, took them on as being his own. Peter Wood, Toowoomba's current deputy mayor, who held the adjoining seat of Toowoomba East, then South, at about the same time that Ray served in parliament perhaps best summed up Ray Bousen: 'He had a very simple idea in his union and parliamentary work; that is, he thought he could be of some use to his fellow workers.' He had no grand ideas about himself, either in union matters or in politics. There was no self-promotion about him. His simple belief was that he may be able to help people.