



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 18 June 2002

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

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.57 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late William Raymond James Bousen, a former Member of the Parliament of Queensland; and
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, for the loss they have sustained.

Mr William Raymond James Bousen was born on 13 January 1911 in Toowoomba in Queensland. Mr Bousen was educated at the Toowoomba North State School and the Toowoomba Technical College. Prior to entering into politics, Mr Bousen worked with Queensland Railways from 1925 to 1952. He attained various positions throughout his tenure of service, ranging from porter at Murphys Creek in 1926 to that of guard in Toowoomba from 1946 to 1953.

Mr Bousen held office for several organisations following his service with the railways. From 1953 to 1969, Mr Bousen was the Toowoomba district secretary for the Australian Railways Union—something of which he was very proud. From 1957 to 1969, he was president of the Toowoomba Trades and Labour Council. From 1958 to 1961, he was the president of the Toowoomba Trades Hall Board and its secretary from 1961 to 1969. Mr Bousen was also the Australian Labor Party's campaign director for state and Commonwealth elections from 1957 to 1969.

Mr Bousen won the seat of Toowoomba West in the state election on 17 May 1969 and held it until 27 May 1972. Following boundary alterations to the seats of Toowoomba West and Toowoomba East, Mr Bousen won the newly created seat of Toowoomba North, which he held until 7 December 1974. In his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly on 28 August 1969, Mr Bousen noted—

Our job, with the help of skilled public servants, is to use our resources in the most productive and efficient way to improve the State of Queensland and the nation to which we belong.

Mr Bousen also stated—

A great responsibility falls on all of us to make, according to our talents, the best contributions that we can for the welfare of our fellow citizens.

The sentiments expressed by Mr Bousen in his maiden speech were echoed in his career. During his term in office, Mr Bousen strove to represent all members of his electorate to the best of his ability and he had a reputation as being a member who got out and about and was seen as a hard worker in his electorate, as indeed he was.

Mr Bousen was involved in numerous community groups and organisations in Toowoomba. This was highlighted through his association as the Patron of the Subnormal Children's Association, the Senior Citizens Club, the Australian Pensioners League and the Civilian Widows Association; Vice-Patron of the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Association; and a member of the Toowoomba Bowling Club and Newtown Rugby League Club. Mr Bousen is credited with being the first local member to seek an additional high school in the city at Wilsonton. This became a reality in the late 1990s. He was also a keen advocate for Newtown's Gladstone Street Special School and the Harlaxton State School preschool. Mr Bousen is survived by his daughters, Shirley and Norma, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

I knew Mr Bousen quite well. He was a decent person. He was a stalwart of the Labor Party in Toowoomba. He was one of the people who encouraged me when I was party secretary for some time to remember that we could win seats in Toowoomba if we had good candidates and we worked hard at it. I have to say that with Kerry Shine in Toowoomba North we have achieved both those things. Mr Bousen would be very proud of the fact that Toowoomba North is held by the Labor Party today because he was a very committed unionist and a very committed member of the Labor Party. I had a very good relationship with him, because with my former association with railways as state secretary of the Queensland Railway Station Officers Union we had a bit of friendly rivalry between my union and the ARU, something we used to joke about from time to time.

But Mr Bousen was down to earth. He was decent. He was solid and he was someone who all members of my party were very proud of. I know he was very well regarded in the Toowoomba area and very well regarded in the Toowoomba Labor Party in particular. As I visited there in my many capacities over the years, he was one of the people who was supported by everybody. That is not always the case in my great party. It was unique that everybody was warm about him. If only I could achieve such a thing myself, Mr Speaker. I extend my sympathy and that of the Labor Party, the government and all members of this House to his family. He will be sadly missed by all of us.