



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

---

Hansard 21 April 2004

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

### Death of Hon. C. R. Porter

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 a.m.): I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Hon. Charles Robert Porter, a former member of the parliament of Queensland and minister of the Crown;

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 parliament in Queensland for the loss that they have sustained.

Mr Charles Robert Porter was born on 17 May 1910 in London in England. Mr Porter arrived in Australia with his family in 1914 and was educated in primary and secondary schools in Brisbane. Before his election Mr Porter was already engaged in public discourse. He was a journalist and freelance writer and was involved in broadcasting and television. He wrote a number of experimental plays for radio, including *Variations on a Printing Press*, *The Footsteps After* and *Nellie Lacy and the Bushranger* and his work was broadcast at home and abroad.

At the same time he was involved in politics. He was general secretary of the Queensland People's Party between 1944 and 1949—the forerunner of the Liberal Party—a role he later continued with the Liberal Party from 1969 to 1977. His active role in public life strengthened when he was elected as the member for Toowong in the state election in May 1966. In his maiden speech on 23 August 1966, he discussed the need for the government to embrace change and to rise to the challenges that that change brings. In this vein, he referred to local decision-making arrangements in greater Brisbane, the relationship between Commonwealth and state governments and reducing road traffic fatalities—all subjects that remain topical today.

During Mr Porter's 14 years as the member for Toowong he provided a valuable service as a member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, a member of the Select Committee on Privileges and as chairman of the Select Committee on Punishment and Crimes. He was also a delegate at the Australian Constitutional Convention in 1975, 1976 and 1978.

The apex of Mr Porter's political career was as the Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs between December 1977 and December 1980. During this time, he continued his focus on the need for change and the importance of governments. Away from politics, Mr Porter was involved in diverse activities. Among many other local cultural, community and sporting bodies, he served as chairman of the Church of England Grammar School from 1958 to 1967.

Mr Porter's funeral service was held yesterday, at the Anglican Church Grammar School. I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to his family: to his children, Penny, Chilla, Warren and Christine, and their families.

As someone who has been around politics for a little time, I can say that Charles Porter was well known in his heyday. He was involved in quite a number of controversies. He was part of what was then a very strong presence for the Liberal Party. He was part of, I guess, the Gordon Chalk mould. The Liberal Party at that time, as many will recall—and I am not trying to be clever when I say this—held quite a number of seats in metropolitan Brisbane and that was because of people like Charles Porter who were well known. He was perhaps, without being unkind, on the drier side of the Liberal Party. I think that is a fair description of Mr Porter. He was someone who was a very good communicator and everyone knew exactly where he stood. Love him or hate him, no-one was in any doubt about the views of Charles Porter.