



Speech by

Hon. Warren Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Wednesday, 1 November 2006

TOBLER, MR E

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Seniors and Youth) (10.19 pm): Every now and then we come across people who are the true soul of this country—hardworking, modest and innovative people who go about the business of getting on with life and helping others with no thought of recompense or self-promotion; true Queenslanders who helped build and shape not only this state but also the nation. I am proud to say that a constituent and a good friend of mine was one of these people. Ernest Lesley Tobler, or ‘Les’ as I knew him, lived in my electorate of Gordonvale for many years. He died recently at the age of 99. Born in 1907, Les grew up in Brisbane and around the Gayndah area. He was a fitter and turner by trade and, like many other men of his era, served his country during the Second World War.

Les was a family man. He was one of seven children and had a family of five himself. There was a sparkle in his eyes when he spoke of family camping and fishing excursions and of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Outdoor living was an important part of Les’s lifestyle. He enjoyed physical activity. In his younger years he won the inaugural bicycle race from Brisbane to Mackay. Bear in mind that it takes about 10 to 12 hours to drive this distance in a modern car today and he won on a pushbike that he built himself!

Les was also something of an inventor. His family will tell you that he could have made a fortune if he had patented his ideas. He made a number of different contraptions to make his work sawing timber easier and he also took on the task of building the family home in Rockhampton after his return from war service, incorporating many novel inventions ahead of their time.

Les understood the pain and devastation suffered by people affected by this year’s Cyclone Larry. Some 56 years ago the frame of the home he was building in Rockhampton was destroyed by a cyclone. After the cyclone, Les moved the family further north to Eton and then Babinda, where he resided for many years before moving to Gordonvale. Working as a scoutmaster and heavily involved in the local Australian Rules club, Les contributed a great deal to the Babinda and Gordonvale communities. The organisations Les belonged to were a reflection of his character. A man of great compassion, he was a tireless worker for a number of community organisations and helped out with the Red Cross and the local RSL well into his 80s.

Les was a fair-minded and passionate man, especially when it came to his politics. He was a life member of the ALP and he attended meetings well into his 90s. I used to pick him up for local branch meetings. His views were well founded and forcefully presented. Les is survived by three of his five children, 20 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. He left his mark in the hearts of those people who knew him best and in the values he passed on to his family. Les was the salt of the earth and a good and respected friend. He will be greatly missed by many.

I table two petitions, both non-conforming petitions—one a petition for the supply of renal dialysis at the Ingham Hospital and the second a petition against quarrying in the Behana Gorge near Gordonvale.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 2,654 petitioners.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition from 1,077 petitioners.