



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Tuesday, 18 May 2010

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: MR JRH BLAKE

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.43 am): Jim Blake spent 12 years in state parliament—first as the member for Isis and then as the member for Bundaberg. As the Premier has already said, James Robert Henry Blake was born in Childers on 6 October 1921 to a canefarming family. Growing up in the rural community near Bundaberg, he attended Doolbi State Primary School and Childers Junior High School before attending Brisbane Tech College. The son of a cane grower, he joined the Army and served as a gunner during the Second World War before returning to Childers and working as a trawlerman and a cane grower. Mr Blake was heavily involved in promoting the interests of cane growers and was a member of the Isis district Canegrowers executive and a vigorous campaigner for irrigation issues in the Isis region.

As a lifelong member of the Labor Party, Mr Blake filled various executive positions for the local community branches before running in the Isis by-election in 1968 following the death of the sitting member and Premier, Country Party MP Jack Pizzey. As the Premier has also said, Mr Blake's victory was a surprise in the conservative seat. Interestingly, Mr Blake, just like his predecessor, Jack Pizzey, was a Childers boy who served during the Second World War as an Army gunner. During his time in the seat of Isis, Mr Blake was applauded for his efforts in ensuring the Bundaberg and district irrigation scheme was a priority for the state government.

In 1974 Mr Blake was defeated by National Party member Lin Powell. After leaving his canefarm in 1977, he contested the seat of Bundaberg at the following state election, and he retained that seat until his retirement in 1983. During his time in the parliament Mr Blake was a shadow minister for primary industries and at other times a shadow minister for fisheries, lands, forestry and water resources. In 1980 he was a member of a parliamentary delegation to Asia. Following his retirement, Mr Blake was awarded a Centenary Medal by the federal government for his service to parliament, politics and the community. Mr Blake is survived by his wife, Edna, four daughters—Julie, Jan, Jennifer and Jayne—and eight grandchildren. I wish to join with the Premier in passing on the condolences of the state opposition to the members of his family.