




Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Hansard Wednesday, 16 February 2011

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: SCOTT, MR RW

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.50 am): I rise to support the condolence motion before the House, which honours the service of Robert William Scott to the people of Queensland. Bob Scott was a good and devoted husband to Jenny and father to Janice, Keith, Shirley and Desley. He often spoke with me about his love for and pride in his family. Following his retirement from parliament, Bob and Jenny moved to Upper Caboolture, which is part of the Morayfield state electorate, and joined the mighty Burpengary branch of the Australian Labor Party. There is no question about Bob's commitment to the Australian Labor Party. He was a proud member. He was a true believer. He was a supportive comrade. He was a mentor to Labor candidates and Labor members of parliament. Most importantly to me, he was my friend—he was my good friend.

Those who knew Bob would know that words were important to Bob. Bob knew words could educate, inspire and motivate. He knew that words could break down cultural barriers and bring people together. Bob made sure every word counted, that every word had meaning and that he meant every word he spoke. He knew that words were powerful. And, as we have heard from previous speakers today, we know that he had lots of words to offer anyone who would listen. Bob made that clear during his maiden speech in this place in 1978. In that speech, he said rather cheekily, but nonetheless insightfully—

I listened with amazement to the utter and absolute piffle that the honourable member for Caboolture went on with in his speech in the Address-in-Reply motion. These speeches are read by the electors and I cannot imagine what they would think of a person who would waste the time of this House by speaking on such trivial matters.

Words were important to Bob.

As we have heard, Bob taught himself the Italian language because many of the Italian migrants in his electorate of Cook had very limited English. Interestingly, when Ken Hayward, the former member for Kallangur, joined this parliament in 1986, he sat next to Bob in this chamber. One day, Ken noticed that Bob was reading something that was not written in English. Ken said, 'Bob, mate, what are you reading? Is that some foreign language or something?' Bob responded, 'Yes, Ken, it's a foreign language. It's Italian.' By learning Italian, Bob did more than just open another channel of communication with people living in the electorate of Cook. By learning Italian, Bob showed that he was a true representative of his community and that he was committed to truly engaging his community in our democracy. Even when it came to Italian, words were important to Bob.

I understand that when Bob retired from this parliament at the 1989 election, he did not give a valedictory speech. When asked why he did not give a valedictory speech, Bob simply answered, 'If I could not say it during my 12 years in this parliament, what good comes from saying it now?' Words were important to Bob.

Heartbreakingly, for the last few years Bob had the burden of battling the terrible disease of dementia. I would regularly visit Bob at the hospital or at the nursing home, and I was always overwhelmed by Bob's honesty, and his tireless and continued advocacy for the Australian Labor Party. Even on my last visits to see him at the nursing home, he introduced me to the staff and other residents of the home as their

local member. When Jason visited as well, Bob was very excited that two local members were there. Words were important to Bob.

I saw Bob in the Caboolture Hospital a few days before he passed away. We spoke about his life, about his time as the member for Cook, about his love for his wife and his family, and the Australian Labor Party, and that terrible disease dementia. He wanted me to say something on his behalf in this condolence motion. He wanted me to call on this parliament to support greater research into finding a cure for dementia. It is a terrible disease, as many members would know. Bob wanted this parliament to know that more needs to be done to find a cure. Words were important to Bob.

Bob was my friend. He taught me many valuable lessons about modesty, humility, integrity, honesty and hard work. He was a great man, and a good and loyal servant of the Australian Labor Party and the people of Queensland, especially the people of the Cook electorate, the people he loved. I hope my words provide honourable members with a small insight into how important he was to the people of Queensland; how important he was to me.