



Speech by

Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Tuesday, 11 September 2012

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE—STEPHAN, MR LW



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.40 am): I move—

- (1) That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Leonard William Stephan, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland; and
- (2) That Madam 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, in the loss they have sustained.

I acknowledge the presence in the House of Mr Stephan's daughters, Gayle and Helen, and their immediate families. Leonard William Stephan, better known to all who knew him as Len, was born in Brisbane on 25 July 1935. Mr Stephan was educated at the Goomboorian State School and St Peter's Lutheran College in Indooroopilly. After leaving school, Len began farming and became actively involved in various agricultural associations in the Gympie region. He served as Director of the Gympie Fruitgrowers Association and was President of the Gympie Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Society. In 1959 he was an international farm exchange student to America for the Junior Farmers Organisation. Mr Stephan also became active in the National Party in the Gympie region. He was treasurer of the Gympie Electorate Council from 1968 to 1973 and the chairman from 1973 to 1979. He was also chairman of the party's Goomboorian branch from 1972 to 1979.

In March 1979 Mr Stephan was elected as a councillor on the Widgee Shire Council, which was a shire that basically surrounded the then separate municipality of Gympie. Mr Stephan's time in local government was not to last too long, however. In August 1979 the longstanding member for Gympie and National Party representative, Max Hodges, decided to retire from politics. Mr Stephan was selected by the National Party to contest the Gympie by-election and on 1 September 1979 he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly. He resigned from the Widgee Shire Council and went on to serve as the member for Gympie for almost 22 years. Len fought off One Nation, winning his closest re-election in many years in 1998 against a One Nation candidate. He retired at the 2001 state election.

During his time in the parliament, Mr Stephan served in many parliamentary positions. He was a member of a number of parliamentary committees and served as Chairman of the Subordinate Legislation Committee from 1987 to 1989 and Chairman of the Public Works Committee from 1996 to 1998. Mr Stephan was Deputy Government Whip from 1987 to September 1989 and was then Government Whip until December 1989 during the premiership of Russell Cooper. Len was a member of a parliamentary delegation to Asia and the Pacific regions in 1981 and a member of a parliamentary trade delegation to Malaysia, Singapore, China and Hong Kong in 1996. He also served as opposition spokesman on regional development and forestry from 1990 to 1991 and opposition spokesman on forestry and administrative services from 1991 to 1992. I am also advised that Mr Stephan was a member of the Queensland Parliamentary Bowls Club and was a key member of the Queensland team at many of the annual interstate parliamentary bowling carnivals held across Australia, where he played with his parliamentary colleagues and bowling mates of the time such as Graham Healy, John Hegarty and Pat Purcell. Mr Stephan and his wife, Ruth, were often attendees at these bowling carnivals, where I am told they were both very fondly regarded.

Leonard William Stephan passed away peacefully on 2 September 2012 and a private funeral service was conducted for him on 5 September 2012. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that Mr Stephan gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Stephan's family and friends.