




Speech By
Lawrence Springborg
MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2015

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: NEWTON, MR LE

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I join with the Premier in passing on the condolences of the LNP to the family and friends of Bill Newton. Bill was the patriarch of the Newton family—much loved and revered in the Glass House region. He was a familiar figure to many who passed him at his roadside stall at Harlan selling the mangoes that the family had become renowned for. In fact, there would be many people in this House who would remember his generous gifts of boxes of mangoes duly delivered every November. Lyell Edward Newton, or Bill as we affectionately knew him, passed away on Sunday, 2 August 2015 aged 80. Bill was born in Brisbane to Edward Charles and Lily Alice in 1935. He attended state school at Morayfield before becoming a fruit grower and grazier at Rocksberg. He was the much loved husband of Margaret and the loving father and father-in-law of Karen and Michael, Andrea and Michael, Glenn and Tanya, Tricia and Harry and of course a much loved grandfather to their families.

Bill Newton was a faithful servant of the conservative side of politics in this state and particularly of his electorate. He was a member of the National Party and served as the chairman of the Caboolture branch of the National Party from 1963 until 1983. In that year, he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as the member for Caboolture. At the following election in 1986, he transferred to the seat of Glass House but he was defeated in the election in 1989.

Bill was a man who had a great influence on many successive MPs for that region. In her maiden speech, former Pumicestone MP Lisa France paid tribute to him, saying that he was the reason she had entered politics. She told the House—

Bill is a wonderful man who still to this day has his community at heart in everything he does. I first met Bill when I was a rookie environmental scientist providing a briefing to him in his role as member for Glass House. At the conclusion of our meeting he said to me, 'Have you ever thought about going into politics? You should consider it'. Well, Bill, I thought about it for over a decade and I finally took your advice.

I, too, have many fond memories of Bill Newton, even though he left the parliament on the very same day that I was elected in 1989. He was a salt-of-the-earth gentleman, someone who was very highly regarded and someone who was respected by all sides of politics. He was a very affable fellow. He was someone who could always tell a very good tale. Indeed, there were many tales told by Bill Newton in this place. Members who were not in this place at that time may not necessarily properly understand the context in the way *Hansard* has captured some of his remarkable speeches in this parliament.

I remember one of the first initiatives of the incoming Labor government was to put on a seafood buffet every Tuesday. Of course, that was a major attraction for not only serving MPs but also former MPs. We would see Bill every Tuesday when he used to come in for that. He would regale us with great stories of his success in parliament, his love of his electorate and also, of course, his great passion for

horticulture for which he was very well renowned. We saw Bill a little bit less often after the former member for Callide, the immediate predecessor to Jeff Seeney, the current member, wrote an article in her local newspaper indicating her concern about the opulence of the seafood buffets and the week after they subsequently disappeared. So then we saw Bill a little bit less. Nevertheless, when we did see him he was still the great character that he had always been.

Indeed, if members want to read one of the more humorous speeches ever delivered in this place—even though I am not sure the passion and the context can ever be properly captured in *Hansard*—I direct them to the speech made by Bill Newton in which he informs this parliament about the difficulties in propagating stubborn cuttings. I would encourage members to read that speech, because it is quite remarkable.

As I said, Bill was a fantastic horticulturalist, he was a wonderful local, someone who was widely respected and he certainly had his entire community deep within his heart right to his very last day. So I join with the Premier and other members of parliament in passing on our heartfelt condolences, prayers and thoughts to the entire Newton family and wish them all the very best in this difficult time as their family struggles with what is a major loss.