

that on Tuesday next a motion of sympathy will be moved to enable hon. members to pay their tributes to our late colleague.

House adjourned, on motion by  
Mr. Heffron, at 1.2 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 27 October, 1959

Printed Question and Answer—Special Adjournment—  
Death of the Hon. J. J. Cahill, M.L.A., Premier  
and Treasurer of New South Wales.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.  
The Prayer was read.

### PRINTED QUESTION AND ANSWER

#### PENSIONS FOR WIDOWS OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. PURDUE asked the MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT,—(1) On the death of a retired married railway employee does his pension, for which he has contributed to the superannuation fund throughout his service, cease, and no benefits are received by his widow? (2) If this is so, will he have the position examined with a view to at least half-pension being continued to widows of such employees?

*Answer*,—(1) On the death of a retired married railway employee his pension ceases. No benefit is received by the widow unless the pensioner dies within six months after retirement, in which case his widow (or representative) would receive a sum which is equal to the difference between actual amount of superannuation allowance received by him and the total deductions made in respect of his wage or salary during his railway service. (2) The hon. member's suggestion has been referred to the Treasury, where the Railway Service Superannuation Fund is being reviewed.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by Mr. Heffron) agreed to:

That, unless otherwise ordered, this House, at its rising this day, do adjourn until Tuesday next at half-past two o'clock, p.m.

#### DEATH OF THE HON. J. J. CAHILL, M.L.A., PREMIER AND TREASURER OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr. HEFFRON (Maroubra), Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Education [2.32]: I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its feeling of deep sorrow at the death of The Hon. John Joseph Cahill, Member for Cook's River, and Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales.

(2) That Mr. Speaker convey to Mrs. Cahill and family the profound sympathy of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

(3) That, as a tribute of respect to the memory of the late Premier, this House do now adjourn.

The sudden, tragic and totally unexpected passing of our greatly esteemed Premier, John Joseph Cahill, was indeed a stunning blow to this Parliament. The shock is still affecting all of us. This saddest of happenings, even now after the lapse of days, seems quite unreal. Knowledge that we shall not again see in this old Chamber that always so alert, so virile, so active and so competent figure of the late Premier we all knew so well must greatly disturb the emotions of all members.

Yes, it seems altogether unreal that seven short days ago Joe Cahill stood where I am standing now to demonstrate once again in most forceful manner that he was at the very zenith of his political career—keen, logical, and sure. For an hour and longer he spoke. It was an unusually important speech, because the Government was, rightly or wrongly, under threat of censure. It was a forceful and telling speech, in which the facts were marshalled with the greatest precision and the arguments rammed home with the relentless force of a bayonet thrust. It was John Joseph Cahill at his fighting very best—factual, temperate, persuasive and logically convincing.

And now that voice is hushed. Nevermore will it be heard in this Parliament where, for approaching thirty-five years, this true son of the people helped in so important a way in the councils and the affairs of this State and the Commonwealth. There is only one solace. Mr. Cahill departed from among us when at the very height of

his mental and political power and achievement. It was not for him—as it has been, unfortunately, for so many others—to suffer political eclipse and to sink back slowly, or suddenly, into political obscurity or oblivion. He died as he would have wished to die: in the saddle; or, to put it another way, with his hand on the throttle of the engine of state.

The death of Mr. Cahill has cast a spell of gloom over the people of this State in every station of life. That is so because they all are so deeply conscious of the fact that they have lost a tried, trusted and capable leader who enjoyed their universal esteem and respect. In fact, he meant even more than that to them. Joe Cahill was their friend, a loyal friend and gifted counsellor whose every endeavour was directed into channels that would serve their interests in every situation that might arise in their daily lives. It was because the people were so conscious of this great trait in his character—it was indeed a trait of greatness—that they were so really devoted to him.

To many of us it seems that the light that illumined the way has gone out. It was the light that led us along the road to great endeavour and to grand achievement. But he leaves behind a cherished and immortal monument that time will not efface. That monument of service is plain for all to see and will outlast any other monument that could be erected in his honour. The memory of him will live for many years in the minds and hearts of the people for whom he worked for so long and so faithfully.

His service is manifest throughout the length and breadth of this State in the great pattern of development that has been put in train which will serve as an inspiration to our Australian people for generations to come.

The works of a great man always live on. John Joseph Cahill requires no greater requiem than that provided by the things which he so capably accomplished in the national interest. He was not cheated or frustrated by death. He had enjoyed a full and happy family life and an outstandingly successful political career, and he died in office at the height of his popularity and

powers. Also, of the very greatest importance, he was the recipient of the full and final rites of his church. As all hon. members know, he would have wished it that way.

It can well be said of our late Premier that, like another great Labor leader, the Rt. Hon. J. B. Chifley, a well-loved Prime Minister, he gave his life in the service of his country and his State. He was a man of unflagging energy and never spared himself for a moment. When his official duties were over for the day—and they were very onerous duties—he regularly worked long into the night. I have never known a man with a more selfless devotion to his work and to the great party which he was so proud to lead. As hon. members know, I worked side by side with him for many years, and I knew how intimately he regarded those who worked with him and just how he felt about hon. members of this House. Despite the fact that often he could let himself go, as the saying is, I never heard him continue any tirade or harbour any bad or nasty thoughts about hon. members on either side of the House. I counted him my greatest friend. So much so, I find it difficult to express myself without the deepest emotion.

As Secretary for Public Works and Minister for Local Government and later as Premier and Treasurer, Mr. Cahill was an outstanding administrator. It can be said truthfully that he placed the welfare of New South Wales and its people above every other consideration. This meant placing a constant physical strain upon himself and it was a responsibility he never shirked. His public life was one of constant activity and he responded immediately to every demand made upon him.

Little more than a week ago Mr. Cahill, as the political leader of this State, was called upon to travel to Queensland to welcome to this State the Commonwealth parliamentary delegates. In a matter of hours he made half a dozen speeches. On Saturday night week, after a most strenuous week of travel, he presided at the State Government's banquet to these distinguished visitors from the British Commonwealth. He spoke for almost an hour and his speech was acclaimed as a notable

one by the visiting delegates. Mr. Cahill's reputation extended well beyond the borders of New South Wales and in Commonwealth Government circles he was known as a wise, skilful and highly respected leader. The Prime Minister said that the death of Mr. Cahill had been a great blow to him personally and that New South Wales had lost a man of distinction, energy and skill. He added:

I respected Mr. Cahill as an honourable opponent . . . it is far better to have an honourable opponent than a dishonourable friend. From the time he became Premier in 1952 Mr. Cahill led the New South Wales Government delegation to Canberra for the annual meetings of the Premiers' Conference and Loan Council. I myself had the honour of going there with him. It was his right as Premier of New South Wales, the senior State of the Commonwealth, to lead on behalf of the States in these complex discussions.

Mr. Cahill was far from being merely a figurehead at Canberra. He was always a dominating figure who had every detail of complicated proceedings at his command. At all times he fought skilfully and without sparing himself in the cause of New South Wales. Yet, in doing so, he was never an obstructionist, and he won high praise from leaders of every party for his objective approach to Loan Council problems. Mr. Cahill set a record for continuous service not only as Premier, but also as Secretary for Public Works and Minister for Local Government. In each of these exacting ministerial duties he proved himself an administrator of the highest order—imaginative, intelligent and tenacious. His record of legislation in Works and Local Government, and later as the co-ordinating authority as head of the State in the Premier's office, will stand as a brilliant memorial to him in future years.

Monuments to Mr. Cahill in our State are many and they are of the highest importance. When we speak of monuments that commemorate public men to posterity, we shall always associate the Sydney Opera House at Benelong Point, now in process of construction, with the name of Mr. Cahill. To him, more than any other person, recognition is due for the approval of this great

*Mr. Heffron]*

cultural project which already has made Sydney known far beyond the boundaries of this State. The opera house is to be opened in 1963, to coincide with the 175th anniversary of the first settlement of Australia. It is sad for us to reflect that Mr. Cahill, who played such a paramount rôle in giving Sydney—indeed Australia—this great project, did not live to see it completed.

For a man to be stricken down at the very peak of his career as a statesman and a leader is a sad blow indeed, and all of us find it hard to accept. When he walked out of this House last Wednesday to proceed to hospital, no one, least of all the Premier, thought for a moment that this was more than a passing illness. I was so optimistic myself, that I gave that opinion to the press, and firmly believed it.

Truly is it said "in the midst of life we are in death". I know of no occasion when the truth of this has been more fully demonstrated.

Here, at one moment, was a strong, virile leader representing his party and Government in his usual forceful, able manner—seemingly indestructible. That is how our late colleague always seemed to me. Often he would leave the House and other places apparently worn out, but the next day he would be his usual self, full of fire and vim. To those who used to say, "The Premier is not looking too well today," I would reply, "Don't worry about him; he is indestructible." Few men could have gone through life working as he did without wrecking their constitutions many years earlier than he did. However, before another sun had set, the final blow, which took him from our midst and shocked his many friends and admirers, had struck.

Joe Cahill was a man who never spared himself in his high office. He lived almost a Spartan life so that he might better serve the people, but always, both in public and private life, he was unassuming and modest. Like other great Labor leaders who passed on before, notably the Rt. Hon. J. Curtin and the Rt. Hon. J. B. Chifley, our Premier sacrificed himself on the altar of duty. But none will say that this sacrifice was in vain. He will long be remembered as an honest

and forthright man who devoted his life to making the world, or this part of it at any rate, a better place to live in than he found it.

As I stand here today, I look back over the years to those many occasions when Mr. Cahill rose to pay his last tribute to parliamentarians who had gone to their long rest. Invariably he referred to the great toll taken by an active public life. Yet he himself never slackened effort; he burned the political candle at both ends.

My remarks would not be complete if I did not quote from the wonderful panegyric spoken by His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy on the funeral day. The cardinal said that few men in public life had been criticised as Mr. Cahill had been. Yet in this public examination he emerged with the reputation of immaculate integrity. It is no exaggeration, as Cardinal Gilroy said, that the whole State is grief stricken at Mr. Cahill's death, and that the people regret and mourn the passing of a leader of whom they were justifiably proud. The cardinal said also that in a searching examination of Mr. Cahill's private and public life his absolute integrity shone forth as clear as the noonday sun. The funeral was the greatest in Sydney's history and the mourners came from every section of our community. Here, indeed, was a man who bewildered his critics and confounded his political traducers and the sceptics. Joe Cahill was a man who found honour, great honour, in his own country, especially in his own State. He was—to express the sorrow of all the people, in the words of the poet Goldsmith—"a man to all the country dear". That was Joe Cahill. On behalf of this House and the people of New South Wales I extend to Mrs. Cahill and the family my deepest sympathy.

Mr. ASKIN (Collaroy) [2.50]: I second the motion, with which my colleagues and I earnestly wish to be associated. We offer our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Cahill and the other members of the sorrowing family. Last Thursday one could sense an atmosphere of gloom settling over Parliament House as successive bulletins giving news of the Premier's worsening condition came to hand. When the last message arrived

we were all shocked and grieved by the announcement of his untimely death. When a national political figure passes on, it is customary not only for his party colleagues but also for his erstwhile political opponents to pay full tribute both to the man and to his work. Sometimes the tendency is, understandably, to over-statement, but in no way do I over-state the position when I say that all my colleagues and I deeply respected the late Hon. J. J. Cahill as a man who had given tremendous service to this State and as a grand leader, a redoubtable and honourable opponent, who quite patently strove always to maintain the dignity and status of Parliament. We respected him, too, as an astute and tenacious fighter for the principles in which he believed.

Persons not connected with politics might find it difficult to understand that men who are strong political opponents can have a high personal regard for each other, but all hon. members know that to be so. One might offer the example of two boxers who, round after round, try to knock each other unconscious, but at the end of the contest shake hands warmly and even embrace. The same spirit prevails in the political arena. Attack and counter-attack, in vigorous and almost uninhibited fashion, as between government and opposition, are part of our parliamentary system, as it has always been and as we all know it to be. Perhaps some day it will be different when antagonism on a party basis is less, and co-operation between men of goodwill and good intention greater—irrespective of party. That day has not yet come.

The late Premier's rise from humble beginnings to the highest office in the State was a magnificent achievement and a reflection of his personal qualities. He had to fight all the way, but when he reached the top he took on a new stature and achieved a broader horizon of political outlook. No one would doubt that he was profoundly influenced by the inspiring example of service given by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip during the Royal tour in 1954, when he was in close association with them. He was extraordinarily able and effective when acting as host to im-

portant visiting personages and was obviously proud of the progress and development in New South Wales. By his lifetime of service to the State, especially as a Minister and later as Premier and Treasurer he contributed materially to that progress. Of course, we differed on some matters, but no fair-minded person could do otherwise than pay full tribute to his great personal effort. The Hon. J. J. Cahill's unflagging work over so many years in the service of the State undoubtedly hastened his death.

Away from politics the late Hon. J. J. Cahill was a genial and likeable person. He had a typically Australian outlook and, by force of his own personality, won great electoral support. This was proved by his leading his party to victory at three successive general elections. No one will cavil when I say that it will be only giving him his due to suggest that without his guiding hand at the helm, the results might well have been markedly different. Our former Premier will be missed in this Parliament; he will be missed at the conference tables at Canberra, and in the many other places where he foregathered and contributed his views. But of course, most of all, he will be missed by his family, to whom he was so obviously attached. We all know he was essentially a good family man. I do not propose to speak at length. This is one of the sad occasions when we realise the inadequacy of mere words to express our feelings. Also, I realise that many other hon. members on both sides of the House wish to pay their tributes. I shall summarise my own feeling by saying that if we apply G. K. Chesterton's rule that the way to measure the stature of a man is by the height of his ambitions, the breadth of his understanding and the depth of his convictions, the late Hon. John Joseph Cahill measures up as a very big man indeed.

Mr. CHAFFEY (Tamworth) [2.56]: On behalf of the Leader of the Country Party, who is ill and cannot be present today, and on behalf of my colleagues of the Country Party, I associate myself most sincerely with the motion moved by the Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition.

On this occasion we are recording one of the inevitabilities in this world—that is, that one has to die. The other inevitability is that we all have to be born. What will take place between those two inevitabilities our Maker alone can foretell.

We are today paying tribute to the memory of an hon. member who served in this Parliament over a period of thirty-four years. We are also paying a tribute to a Premier with whose passing the Crown has lost the support and guidance of a notable adviser and first Minister. The State itself has lost a man who set an example which will be a challenge to all those who come after him. We are paying these tributes in a Chamber that has been associated with so many years of the life of the late John Joseph Cahill. I should think that there is probably nothing he would have wished more than that he might be remembered with respect in this place for the work that he did here.

The late John Joseph Cahill was a worker in every true sense of the word, but only those intimately connected with him know of the hours he spent under the great mental and physical strain imposed on him over the many years of his public service. I suppose the efficiency or the effectiveness of a man is measured most by his practical achievements, and the late Premier was recognised in this Parliament as a man of achievement. I do not know who is regarded as today's leading cricketer, but not many years ago it was every cricketer's ambition to be able to bowl Don Bradman. If there is any relationship between the game of cricket and this Parliament, some of us for many years have been bowling to the late Premier. If we bowled a loose one he hit it for six. He cut us through slips and glanced us to leg. He drove us to the on and to the off. If there was anything in the nature of a bumper or a body-line ball bowled to him, he let it pass over his head; nobody was more adept at blocking a googly. On many occasions, with the help of the Government Whip, he even successfully appealed against the light.

The toll of public life is very severe. Often in this Assembly we have motions like this. Only ten of the present ninety-three members of this Assembly were here

when I first entered this House a little less than twenty years ago. I can remember the late Premier as a member of the Opposition; I remember also his elevation to the Ministry as Minister for Public Works and Minister for Local Government, then his progression to Premier, an office he held for a record term prior to his untimely death. We all know that he received wonderful support from his helpmate, his wife. We all know, too, that he derived a great deal of strength from his family, with whom he shared many of his thoughts, ideals and aspirations.

The Premier referred to the visit here of delegates of other British Commonwealth countries. On the Saturday night prior to his passing, the Hon. J. J. Cahill emphasised his abiding faith in the British parliamentary system of government with our allegiance to the Queen, our Sovereign. He was most vehement in condemning the cult of the personality, which is a feature of totalitarian regimes and has no place under our system of joint responsibility in government. Parliament is a very human institution and we remember the late Premier for his personal qualities, especially his good humour. We recall the enthusiasm with which he entered into an argument on some controversial issue without engaging in personalities. These qualities earned him the respect of both sides of the House. The Country Party wishes to be most strongly associated with this motion. In paying tribute to the memory of John Joseph Cahill we of the Country Party offer our sincere condolences to Mrs. Cahill and the members of her family in their sad and irreparable loss.

Mr. C. A. KELLY (Bathurst), Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourist Activities [3.4]: I wish to join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Country Party in this motion, and to associate myself with the message of sympathy to the Cahill family. I do so on a personal rather than a political basis. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party said that only ten remain of the members of this Assembly who were here when he was elected to this House. When I look around I see only

three hon. members who were present when the late Premier and I first entered this Assembly in 1925. Of course, the hon. member for Tenterfield was here even before us. We were both defeated in 1932, and it was then that I became more closely associated with Mr. Cahill than at any other time. We were defeated in most strenuous and bad times and we had to seek employment under difficult circumstances and most trying conditions. It was during those few years that I became more closely associated with him than even over the past seven years. We were both re-elected to Parliament in 1935, and since then I have been closely associated with the late Premier.

Mr. Cahill was no ordinary man, in the sense that he was a politician of high order; rather was he a deeply religious man, and most of his activities and sound judgments sprang from the spiritual guidance he always sought. I am certain that his prayers were answered on many occasions.

The night before Mr. Cahill took ill, he sent me a message, asking me to come to see him. When I went to his room he said that he wished to have a talk with me, and I replied that I had work to do and did not have much time for sitting down and talking. He said, "You had better sit down and have a talk, because it is later than we both think." How prophetic were those words! We spoke of many things—especially our families and our possible future. I was most vividly impressed by his remarks about his family and on life generally.

Not only have we lost a good member of this House, but the citizens of the State also have lost a good man. I wish to pay public tribute to him as a man rather than as a politician. I associate myself with the motion before the House to convey to Mrs. Cahill and her family our deepest sympathy. I feel sure that they will be comforted by the knowledge that their husband and father was a man of a stature and a character that give them every justification to be proud of their relationship to him. I feel richer for having known Joseph Cahill as my good friend.

Mr. TREATT (Woollahra) [3.8]: I am grateful for the opportunity of joining in

this last parliamentary tribute to the memory of Joseph Cahill, and in joining in the expression of sympathy to his wife and family. I was Leader of the Opposition in this House for many years, and from the outset I seem to have been engaged in parliamentary conflict with Joseph Cahill. After World War II this State was experiencing many blackouts, and the Opposition conducted assault after assault upon the Government and the administration of Joseph Cahill as Secretary for Public Works. During the whole of that time, despite the fact that the Opposition had victory after victory in by-elections in electorates such as Coogee, Kogarah and Concord, the late Premier never let up. His courage, tenacity and parliamentary agility showed him to be in the forefront of parliamentarians. It was not until 1953 that the tide of victory turned and Joseph Cahill, for the first time, received parliamentary confirmation of his premiership. But that was not his greatest victory, for there were special circumstances in the 1953 elections.

We shall remember him not for that victory but, as most critics would confess, for the magnificent manner in which he fought the elections this year, turning what many people believed was impending defeat into victory for the Parliamentary Labor Party. I suppose that no one would deny that along the path to that victory, where he gamely contended, he was probably sowing the seeds of his subsequent death. That is my belief. Over the years from this place of detachment here I have observed him with interest and affection and noticed the decline in his health. On occasions I have warned him of what I believed might happen. After all, these parliamentary conflicts are ephemeral; they pass more quickly from our memory than the personal relations of men with one another.

In 1954 I was fortunate to go abroad as a representative of this Parliament at the invitation of the Government. My wife and I went overseas with Mr. Cahill, Mrs. Cahill and their family, and we all returned on the same boat. It was then that I learned how considerate, courteous and capable was the Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales—and how worthy a representative of our State he proved to be. At

*Mr. Treatl*

the same time my wife and I had the advantage and the pleasure of learning to know something of the grace, charm and sincerity of Mrs. Cahill and her two daughters. Paraphrasing the words of somebody else, I would say this of Mr. Cahill: Take him for all in all, he was a man: the Australian Labor Party may not look upon him like again.

Mr. BOOTH (Kurri Kurri) [3.13]: This is the saddest occasion of all my public career. It is not easy to say farewell to a man like Joe Cahill. I met Joe back in 1925. We came here together, both of us of the same age, entering Parliament for the first time and wondering what it was like. In those days Joe had his old Oakland car. How he loved it—better than his ministerial car in later years. We were friends together throughout our whole careers. Never did the bonds of friendship slacken. Joe Cahill was a man among men. He was a son of humble parents and he never forgot it. Throughout his career he remembered that at one time he worked hard in a humble way for his living.

Of the many monuments that our old friend left behind, none is greater than the State Dockyard in Newcastle harbour. What a loyal and faithful leader he was. What a pal and a friend to almost everyone. We all mourn him, and those who knew him best will mourn him most. To his wife and family I say that there is really no need to mourn his departure. Men like Joe Cahill never die; their spirit will go on for ever. He was deeply devoted to his wife and his family. During the past few days we have seen many photographs of our old pal, and to my mind the best of all was one taken of him last week with his grandchildren around him. That was what Joe liked—his home and his family. What an inspiration and a guide his life has been to all of us. All my colleagues on this side of the House join with me in expressing our sincere sympathy. We pray that even in this, the darkest of hours, God will guide his family to see the silver lining behind the dark clouds.

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER (Tenterfield) [3.18]: As the oldest member of this Assembly and as one who saw the entry of our

late Premier into this House in 1925, I offer to his family my expressions of sympathy along with those of all other hon. members who have spoken. As one goes through life one gets many shocks. Many of us here have seen men die suddenly, but never in all my life have I felt such a shock as when I learnt that the Premier was dead. Only last Tuesday afternoon we saw him here in action. He was a man of action always. Though I felt that he was not well—in fact I knew he was not well, for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education had told me that he was afraid for him—I never thought that he was so near his end. When I heard of his death, I realised what a terrific shock it would be to his wife and family and to all his friends.

First I want to convey to Mrs. Cahill and her family my very warmest sympathy. My wife and I had received many courtesies from the Premier and his lady. I have always felt that no man in a high office, as he was, could be better or more faithfully served than he was by his wife. She was always at his call, and acquitted herself with great dignity in the position that she occupied.

I like to think that the Premier profited from his association, right from the beginning, with the Government that was in office when he was elected. For about twelve years he was on this side of the House and I was on the Government side. Indeed, I was often in the ministerial chair. I was a Minister and Deputy Premier for many years, and I think that the late John Joseph Cahill cut his teeth on me. Every man who wants to get anywhere in this Parliament should first have a good many years in opposition, for that is the greatest training a man can have. Afterwards, when he gets into office, he is somewhat restricted, but in opposition he is free. Our friend exercised that freedom in the heartiest possible manner. After he went to the Government side and I came to this side, I cut some teeth on him. I want to place it on record that he was always a most exhilarating opponent and a very good friend.

His greatest achievement, in my view, was that he understood the working of the British parliamentary system, of which we are part. He realised that the whole objective of this Assembly, and of those of us in it, is to reach some fair compromise of all the conflicting parts that will be in the best interests of the whole community. He never failed to take what was good from the Opposition side. Only a few weeks ago I had to draw his attention to the fact that he had not initiated everything, and he was the first to laugh, quite uproariously, when I recounted some of the things that perhaps had come from this side. He was a good administrator and a most successful Premier because he made use of everything that was at his hands. He was always strong enough to set aside carefully the things emanating from his own great party that he did not think would mix well with what he considered was best for the community. Those were the strong things, the great things, in our late Premier.

The late Joseph Cahill had complete confidence in himself, yet he was ever ready to see the other man's point of view and, if he thought it worth while, to accept it. He was ready to recognise that one cannot always get what one wants as quickly as one wants it. He had much patience, and for that reason I looked upon him as a great man. I believe that I can truthfully say that he had as much respect and regard for me as I most definitely had for him. He will go down on record as one of the greatest parliamentarians ever to have sat in this House; he understood the parliamentary system and made use of it in the proper way. I am proud to have had the privilege of serving for more than thirty years in this House as a friend of the late Premier. I do not think that we ever had a cross word, personally. He was most approachable, courteous and thoughtful.

I join with all my friends in this House in supporting the motion. I sincerely hope that Mrs. Cahill and her family will take comfort from the fact that the late Premier went out fighting, which, after all, is probably the greatest gift that can be given a man who has led a wholesome and active life.



Mr. MORTON (Mosman) [3.29]: I wish to be warmly associated with the motion moved by the Premier, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, and supported by the hon. member for Woollahra, the hon. member for Tenterfield, the hon. member for Kurri Kurri and the Chief Secretary. I pay a tribute to a great Australian—a man whom I regarded as a shrewd opponent with outstanding political cunning. The late Premier honoured the Queen, and loved his church and country. He was a faithful servant of the party that he led in such a distinguished fashion, and made a great contribution to the development of New South Wales. I make bold to say that the Labor Party will not be able to find another J. J. Cahill. Of course, others will fill the position, and I pay my respect to the new Premier and Treasurer, who will fill the position with distinction. I offer him my sincere good wishes, but I doubt whether the Labor Party will be able for many years to find a man who can weld together the varying political influences that we all know are to be found in this Chamber—not always on the one side of the House.

The late Premier's character was beyond reproach. To any man who has to lead a political party, that is fundamental. The Labor Party was indeed fortunate to have at its helm a man of such character. One of his outstanding characteristics was his home life. Mrs. Cahill was his partner in all his labours. She and her family will surely find some little consolation in the thought that whatever his problems were—and they were many—she shared them with him. We all know that no one, irrespective of where he is at the political level, can make a success of his task unless he has the unqualified support, goodwill, understanding and patience of his wife. The late Hon. J. J. Cahill truly achieved great heights. I have said that he had a long and honourable association with the Australian Labor Party. I am glad that the Chief Secretary touched upon our colleague's love for his church. He practised his theory that we should go to church other than when we are in trouble. I, too, believe in that principle. If more of the community followed that practice perhaps all of us might not find ourselves in so

much trouble. I have no doubt that the guidance, comfort and help that the late Premier received from his church helped him considerably in the task that he undertook.

I do not subscribe to the view that he was well until last Tuesday. To my mind he was by no means well, but he had never shirked a fight. He was challenged; he accepted. I am confident that in normal circumstances the late Premier would not have been here on Tuesday. We have all seen him in action in this Chamber. I have often remarked to many of the newer members of Parliament that I had never yet seen any hon. member score off the Premier with a question. He was in his true form during the debate last Tuesday—and that was characteristic of the man himself. I support strongly and warmly everything that has been said by the Premier and other hon. members. Perhaps I might add that I trust the happy memories which will for ever remain with Mrs. Cahill and her family will, in some way, help them to overcome a sorrow, the weight and depth of which others cannot possibly realise.

Mr. STEWART FRASER (Gordon) [3.36]: I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, to the House and to my party, for granting me this opportunity, as a comparative junior member of Parliament, to pay my tribute to a man for whom I have long entertained admiration and affection. I first came to know John Joseph Cahill in 1942, a time in my life when perhaps I was easily involved emotionally. I then came to entertain a very great respect for him because, as Secretary for Public Works and Minister for Local Government, he was interested in an enterprise that I was also interested in—the building of small ships. It was not perhaps a very successful proposition commercially, but it certainly made a contribution to Australia's war effort. I had just returned from active service and was trying to find a way to occupy in a useful fashion such talents as I had. Later I engaged in bitter controversy with him as Premier. He was a champion of State enterprise, and I was an advocate of free enterprise. The battle went on between us for years, but I believe that behind the scenes we both enjoyed it.

I like to recall a story about the late Premier. Apparently I was under discussion in the lobbies about my industrial activities or my public statements. I was being bitterly reviled by certain of my friends on the Government side of the House—perhaps rightly. Mr. Cahill then said “Well, there is one thing I can say about Stewart Fraser, he does not deal in dirt.” Neither did the Premier deal in dirt. He kept his head high and his hands clean throughout the whole of his public life. I am glad that one of his last public duties was to be guest of honour at a function of an organisation with which I am associated. One of his ministerial colleagues told me that the Premier had thoroughly enjoyed himself there—and I am very glad of that. The Hon. J. J. Cahill was very proud of the speech that he made there, and I place on record that we also were very proud that he could attend that function as Premier. The message that he then gave us will be circulated to our associates throughout Australia, and I have no doubt that it will inspire them all—as it did those of us who heard him. I say to his widow that in her mourning she is certainly in goodly company and it will not be long before she, like the rest of us, will remember John Joseph Cahill with pleasure and with gratitude.

Mr. MALLAM (Dulwich Hill) [3.40]: I wish to be associated with this motion, and I offer my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Cahill and her family in their sad bereavement. In offering these condolences I include my wife and the constituents of the electorate of Dulwich Hill, where the late Joe Cahill lived the greater part of his life. This morning I attended requiem mass at St. Brigid’s Church, which Joe Cahill had attended almost all his life. Although very short notice was given of this mass the church was packed to capacity with people from all walks of life. One elderly gentleman passed this appropriate remark to me: “It seems only a little while ago that Joe Cahill used to come along here with his little tucker box going to work. He always had a friendly wave and would say ‘Good day.’ Only last week when passing in a big

black motor car he waved and said ‘Good day’ and used my Christian name. Joe Cahill has never altered. He has been through the fires of the industrial movement and has been finely tempered. He was a fit and proper man to lead this great Labor movement.” That is true. Those who disagreed with him from time to time knew that they were fighting somebody who knew the movement and, having been through the fires, was finely tempered and capable.

I was pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Kurri Kurri about the old Oakland car. Very few people would remember those days now. Of course, I remember the early morning swims in the bleak periods many years ago when Mr. Cahill’s family was much younger. I am among the few who were privileged to enter Joe Cahill’s home and I could not agree more with the cardinal’s remark last Saturday that the Cahill family was a model family. Joe Cahill had the perfect partner in Mrs. Cahill, and the perfect family. This morning his son told me, “We have lost the cornerstone.” I felt very sad and sorry. He was indeed a great cornerstone and I am proud to have known him. For many years the Labor movement and the people of this country will regret his passing. He was the cornerstone of the Labor movement in New South Wales. I well remember the great fights he had to rehabilitate the party in the days when, as the hon. member for Tenterfield said, he was cutting his teeth.

I remember the Hurstville by-election and the fights the Labor Party then had. In those days Joe Cahill had a strong belief that his party would become united to lead the people. I remember his asking me at an hour’s notice, in 1951, to contest the Burwood seat. I was not much interested then. Contesting the Burwood seat, as the hon. member for Burwood knows, is not a pleasant undertaking for a Labor man. I asked Mr. Cahill the reason. He said, “I have some very important workers’ compensation legislation to go through for the people of this State and I want to be sure it goes through.” At all times Joe Cahill thought of the people, especially the

under-privileged sections of the community. With his passing we have lost a great statesman, a great man and a great builder.

Joe Cahill believed in building and progress. I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Kurri Kurri say that the State Dockyard is a great monument to him in Newcastle. Another great monument is the Cahill Expressway, as some day will be the Cahill Opera House. The late Premier was happy and pleased when new work had been completed. As I found when touring the South Coast with him, his greatest pride was derived not so much in turning on the water, but in knowing that something had been achieved. He had the true spirit of nationalism. He loved his country, his family and his political party. In conclusion, I shall repeat the tribute paid to him by Cardinal Gilroy—his absolute integrity shone forth as clear as the noonday sun. This is absolutely true. Joe Cahill was a good man.

*Hon members and officers of the House standing in their places,*

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 3.45 p.m. until  
2.30 p.m., Tuesday.

---

## Legislative Council

Thursday, 29 October, 1959

---

Death of the Hon. J. J. Cahill, M.L.A., Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales—Legislative Council (Return of Writ)—Assent to Bills—New Administration (Ministerial Statement)—Special Adjournment—Adjournment (Business of the House).

---

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.29 p.m.  
The Prayer was read.

### DEATH OF THE HON. J. J. CAHILL, M.L.A., PREMIER AND TREASURER OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.31]:  
I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its deep sense of the loss sustained to the State and the Parliament of New South

Wales in the removal, by death, of the Honourable John Joseph Cahill, M.L.A., Premier and Treasurer.

(2) That the Honourable the President be requested to communicate this resolution to Mrs. Cahill and family and to express the sorrow and sympathy of this House in their bereavement.

Of all the occasions when I have moved similar motions on the death of colleagues and personal friends, this is the saddest. The shock that was sustained by the colleagues of the late Premier and Treasurer and the community seldom occurs even in this uncertain life. It was to me personally a most unnerving experience to learn that one with whom I had worked for close on two decades had been suddenly taken from us in the full flower of his vigour.

The Hon. J. J. Cahill was indeed a man of great energy. He was a worker who never spared himself and always took his responsibilities seriously. Everyone in the community will readily agree that at all times he maintained and upheld the prestige and dignity of the high office that he graced with distinction for so many years. Yet John Joseph Cahill was a simple man. He was a real Australian who mixed with all classes in society. He was a man of the people, friendly and courteous to all.

For many years the late Premier underwent considerable political stress and strain. Characteristically, he was always courteous and kindly to his colleagues and others, and never testy or irritable with those with whom he had to deal. I know of no other man in political life more liked for his own personal character than John Joseph Cahill. That universal esteem in which he was held evoked the widespread sorrow expressed by everybody on his passing.

He had a full and fruitful life. He was in the public eye in New South Wales—nay, in Australia—for many years during which he displayed all the characteristics so necessary to lead a government successfully and to accomplish great achievements. Throughout the State are many works that are monuments to his drive and energy when he was Secretary for Public Works—a most difficult time when men and materials were in short supply. His family and colleagues can take consolation in his great accomplishments when he held this portfolio.