

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 12 August, 1980

Third Session of the Forty-Sixth Parliament—Opening of Session—Assent to Bills—Forestry Act (Revocation of Dedications)—Electoral District of Murray (Death of Mary Meillon: Issue of Writ)—Electoral District of Ku-ring-gai (Resignation of the Honourable John Clarkson Maddison, B.A., LL.B.: Issue of Writ)—Electoral District of Bankstown (Death of Nicholas Joseph Kearns: Issue of Writ)—Electoral District of Sturt (Resignation of Timothy Andrew Fischer, Vacant Seat)—Death of Harold Ernest Jackson (a former member of the Legislative Assembly)—Death of James Guy Dalley Arkins (a former member of the Legislative Assembly)—Death of Arthur Edward Greenup (a former member of the Legislative Assembly)—Death of the Honourable Mark Gosling (a former Minister of the Crown)—Death of Mary Meillon (Member for Murray)—Death of Nicholas Joseph Kearns (Member for Bankstown)—Adjournment.

THIRD SESSION OF THE FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

The House met at noon, pursuant to the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor.

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Lawrence Borthwick Kelly) took the chair.

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

OPENING OF SESSION

The Usher of the Black Rod, being admitted, delivered a message from His Excellency the Governor requesting the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the Legislative Council Chamber.

The House went, and honourable members having returned,

[Mr Speaker left the chair at 1.2 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

ASSENT TO BILLS

Royal assent to the following bills of the previous session reported:

Dairy Industry Marketing (Amendment) Bill
 Pastures Protection (Amendment) Bill
 Soil Conservation (Amendment) Bill
 Baulkham Hills Shire Council (Norfolk Place Public Reserve Land Sale) Bill
 Legal Practitioners (Amendment) Bill
 Constitution (Amendment) Bill
 Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation (Constitution) Amendment Bill
 Public Works (Amendment) Bill
 Contracts Review Bill
 District Court (Contracts Review) Amendment Bill
 Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation (Amendment) Bill
 Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Bill
 State Emergency Services and Civil Defence (Amendment) Bill
 Stock Diseases (Amendment) Bill
 Waste Disposal (Amendment) Bill
 Co-operation (Amendment) Bill
 Coroners Bill
 Child Welfare (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Coal Mines Regulation (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Fire Brigades (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Jury (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Liquor (Amendment) Bill
 Physiotherapists Registration (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Prisons (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Coroners) Amendment Bill
 Education Commission Bill
 Miscellaneous Acts (Education Commission) Repeal and Amendment Bill
 Meat Industry (Amendment) Bill
 Registered Clubs (Amendment) Bill
 Gaming and Betting (Registered Clubs) Amendment Bill
 Associated General Contractors Insurance Company Limited Bill
 Anti-Discrimination (Amendment) Bill
 Anti-Discrimination (Education Commission) Amendment Bill
 Defamation (Anti-Discrimination) Amendment Bill
 Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Anti-Discrimination) Amendment Bill

Art Gallery of New South Wales Bill
 Liquor (Art Gallery of New South Wales) Amendment Bill
 Courts of Petty Sessions (Civil Claims) Amendment Bill
 Frustrated Contracts (Petty Sessions) Amendment Bill
 Crimes (Amendment) Bill
 Government and Related Employees Appeal Tribunal Bill
 Electricity Commission (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Industrial Arbitration (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Judges' Pensions (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Police Regulation (Allegations of Misconduct) Appeal Tribunal
 (Amendment) Bill
 Police Regulation (Appeals) Appeal Tribunal (Amendment) Bill
 Police Regulation (Priority Lists) Amendment Bill
 Public Service (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Appeal Tribunal)
 Amendment Bill
 Supreme Court (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Teaching Service (Appeal Tribunal) Amendment Bill
 Government Railways (Superannuation) Amendment Bill
 Hunter Valley Conservation Trust (Amendment) Bill
 Industrial Arbitration (Amendment) Bill
 Matraville Oil Refinery Bill
 New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry (Amendment) Bill
 Public Transport Commission (Loans) Amendment Bill
 Land Commission (Temporary Financial Accommodation) Amend-
 ment Bill
 Superannuation (Amendment) Bill
 Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments (Invest-
 ment) Amendment Bill
 Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Superannuation) Amend-
 ment Bill
 Weights and Measures (Amendment) Bill
 Liquor (Weights and Measures) Amendment Bill
 Adoption of Children (Amendment) Bill
 Local Government (Amendment) Bill
 Municipal Council of Sydney Electric Lighting (Amendment) Bill
 Public Health (Local Government) Amendment Bill
 Land and Environment Court (Amendment) Bill
 Mining (Amendment) Bill
 Motor Vehicle Repairs Bill
 Motor Dealers (Motor Vehicle Repairs) Amendment Bill
 Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Motor Vehicles Repairs)
 Amendment Bill

National Parks and Wildlife (State Recreation Areas) Amendment Bill
Workers' Compensation (Amendment) Bill
Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers (Superannuation) Amendment Bill
Drug and Alcohol Authority Bill
Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Drug and Alcohol
Authority) Amendment Bill
Hay Weir Bill
Historic Houses Bill
Elizabeth Bay House Trust (Repeal) Bill
Liquor (Historic Houses) Amendment Bill
National Parks and Wildlife (Vaucluse House) Amendment Bill
Industrial Arbitration (Oil Industry) Amendment Bill
Legal Practitioners (Further Amendment) Bill
Parliamentary Committees Enabling Bill
Police Regulation (Priority Lists and Appeals) Amendment Bill
Prisons (Amendment and Validation) Bill
Public Hospitals (Amendment) Bill
Softwood Forestry Agreement Ratification Bill
Stamp Duties (Amendment) Bill
Teaching Service (Amendment) Bill
Education Commission (Amendment) Bill
Transport Authorities Bill
Audit (Transport Authorities) Amendment Bill
Capital Debt Charges (Transport Authorities) Amendment Bill
Government Railways (Amendment) Bill
Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration (Transport Authorities)
Amendment Bill
Transport (Amendment) Bill
Transport Appeal Boards Bill
University of Newcastle (Amendment) Bill
Macquarie University (Amendment) Bill
University of New England (Amendment) Bill

FORESTRY ACT: REVOCATION OF DEDICATIONS

Mr Speaker reported a communication from His Excellency the Governor acknowledging receipt of the resolution adopted by the Legislative Assembly on 2nd April, 1980, regarding the revocation of the dedication of parts of certain state forests.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF MURRAY

Death of Mary Meillon: Issue of Writ

Mr Speaker reported the death on 9th June, 1980, of Mary Meillon, lately serving in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales as member for the electoral

district of Murray; also that, in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, he had issued a writ on 11th August, 1980, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Murray in the room of Mary Meillon, deceased, and that such writ was returnable on or before 26th September, 1980.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF KU-RING-GAI

Resignation of the Honourable John Clarkson Maddison, B.A., LL.B.: Issue of Writ

Mr Speaker informed the House that on 4th July, 1980, he had received a letter from the Hon. John Clarkson Maddison, B.A., LL.B., resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Ku-ring-gai; also that, in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, he had issued a writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy. Mr Speaker informed the House further that such writ was returnable on or before 26th September, 1980.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BANKSTOWN

Death of Nicholas Joseph Kearns: Issue of Writ

Mr Speaker reported the death on 24th July, 1980, of Nicholas Joseph Kearns, lately serving in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales as member for the electoral district of Bankstown; also that, in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, he had issued a writ on 11th August, 1980, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Bankstown in the room of Nicholas Joseph Kearns, deceased, and that such writ was returnable on or before 26th September, 1980.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF STURT

Resignation of Timothy Andrew Fischer

Mr SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have this day received a letter from Timothy Andrew Fischer resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Sturt.

Vacant Seat

Motion (by Mr Ferguson) agreed to:

That the seat of Timothy Andrew Fischer, Member for the Electoral District of Sturt, has become, and is now, vacant by reason of the resignation therefrom by the said Timothy Andrew Fischer.

DEATH OF HAROLD ERNEST JACKSON, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to announce to the House the death of Harold Ernest Jackson, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who represented the electorate of Gosford from 1950 to 1965. On behalf of the House I have extended to the family of the late gentleman the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss they have sustained. Will honourable members please stand as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places.

DEATH OF JAMES GUY DALLEY ARKINS, A FORMER MEMBER
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to announce to the House the death of James Guy Dalley Arkins, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who represented the electorate of Castlereagh from 1915 to 1920, the electorate of St George from 1920 to 1927, the electorate of Rockdale from 1927 to 1930 and the electorate of Dulwich Hill from 1938 to 1941. On behalf of the House I have extended to the family of the late gentleman the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss they have sustained. Will honourable members please stand as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places.

DEATH OF ARTHUR EDWARD GREENUP, A FORMER MEMBER
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death of Arthur Edward Greenup, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who represented the electoral district of Newtown—Annandale from 1950 to 1953. On behalf of the House I have extended to the family of the late gentleman the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss they have sustained. Will honourable members please stand as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places.

DEATH OF MARK GOSLING, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports [2.36]: I move:

That this House extends to the family of Mark Gosling the deep sympathy of Members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death of Mark Gosling, a former Minister of the Crown.

Mark Gosling, who served as Colonial Secretary in two of the three Lang ministries, died in May at the age of 94. After only a primary education, Mr Gosling became a painter and was vice-president of the Painters' Union from 1915 to 1918. He was president of the Petersham and Homedale leagues of the Labor Party and president of the Barton federal electorate council.

In 1915–16 Mr Gosling was chairman of the Petersham and districts anti-conscription campaign. He was Labor member for St George for seven years, from 20th March, 1920. He then represented Oatley from 1927 to 1930 and Kogarah from 1930 to 1932. He lost his seat in the landslide victory of the Stevens Government in 1932. In his maiden speech in 1920 he displayed his commitment to the cause of his fellow workers when he said:

I believe in my class, right or wrong, and when I find that class fighting the battle of their lives all the ethics you can evoke will not prevent me from being on their side.

Indicative of this attitude was his championing of the cause of the dismissed workers involved in the 1917 transport strike. Mark Gosling's parliamentary career embraced some of the most difficult and turbulent years in the political history of New South

Wales. He was a consistent supporter of the Hon. J. T. Lang, and served as Colonial Secretary in two of the three Lang ministries. That portfolio brought him into close contact with the devastating social consequences of the Great Depression. The records of the Parliamentary Debates detail his activities, particularly those relating to food relief and unemployment.

His portfolio embroiled him in some of the most controversial issues of the period. For example, his portfolio incorporated responsibility for the police department. The Hon. J. T. Lang, in his book *The Turbulent Years*, details how he and Mr Gosling became concerned at the disruptive potential of the movement known as the New Guard. On behalf of the Government I extend our deep sympathy to his three sons.

Mr MASON (Dubbo), Leader of the Opposition [2.38]: I second the motion. The Opposition wishes to join with the Government in expressing sympathy to the family of the Hon. Mark Gosling who, as the Deputy Premier has said, held the distinguished office of Colonial Secretary in this Parliament. Mr Gosling was born in Birmingham in 1886. He migrated to Australia and became a painter and building contractor, subsequently becoming vice-president of the Painters' Union in 1915. He was deeply involved in Labor Party affairs and at various times held the position of president of the Barton federal electorate council and a member of the central executive of the local party. His interesting political involvement included chairmanship of the Petersham and district anti-conscription campaign in 1915 and 1916. I am sure honourable members would have some picture in their minds of those turbulent days and of the meetings and turmoil that surrounded a position such as that held by Mr Gosling.

During his distinguished parliamentary career, which began in 1920, Mr Gosling represented the electorates of St George, Oatley and Kogarah. As well, he served for a period as a Legislative Councillor. Mr Gosling, who was a man of strong moral belief, belonged to the Industrial Christian Fellowship Council and was an active member of the Church of England. I was intrigued to read in the parliamentary record this description of Mr Gosling by himself: "Teetotaler, Freemason and Church of England". I should imagine that this interesting description would not fit too many members of this Parliament.

As the Deputy Premier has said, Mr Gosling lived during a time of tremendous political upheaval in this State. He was involved in some of the most dramatic political clashes witnessed in this Chamber. Members who in this era share in the comparative hush of such occasions will find in the *Hansard* of those days a record of the tremendous feeling, conflict and controversy that surrounded the years when Mr Gosling played a significant role in his party under the leadership of the Premier, then Mr Jack Lang. It was a time of economic depression and of great social challenge. Mr Gosling served his party and the Parliament to the utmost of his ability. The Opposition joins with the Government in expressing to all members of his family deepest sympathy on his passing.

Mr CRABTREE (Kogarah), Minister for Police and Minister for Services [2.42]: I take this opportunity to join with the Acting Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in conveying to the relatives of the late Mark Gosling my personal sympathy on this sad occasion. I joined the Labor Party because of Mark Gosling. No finer man ever graced the halls of this Parliament. My late father was his campaign director in Sans Souci. Mark Gosling was a fine man, and as other speakers have said, a man

of responsibility. Unfortunately, the years when he was a member here were turbulent, especially for the Labor Party. During that time quite a lot of things occurred for which Mark Gosling was not responsible. He was elected to Parliament as a member for St George under the 5-member electorate system. It is strange that another of the members of that 5-member constituency was Mr Arkins in respect of whom earlier today this House passed a motion of condolence.

Mark Gosling will be remembered locally for his work in pressing for many improvements in the St George district. He was successful in acquiring the present site for Sydney Technical High School in Forest Road, Bexley. I am sure that many thousands of students of that school would pay tribute to the forethought of Mr Gosling. Also, he agitated for the construction of the Tempe—East Hills railway line which today serves a quarter of a million people of this expanding metropolis. I feel a personal loss, for when I became a member of Parliament in 1953 my father, when introducing Mr Gosling to me, said, "I want you to meet one of the finest men who ever came to the New South Wales Parliament; he can pass on to you a little of his training". Without any sense of ego, I believe I was well trained by Mark Gosling, who taught me most of the tricks of the political trade that I know.

In 1927, Mark Gosling became a Minister of the Crown, holding the portfolio of Colonial Secretary. By a strange quirk of fate the room I have in the building on the corner of Bridge and Macquarie streets is the one that Mark Gosling occupied as Colonial Secretary. One of his ministerial responsibilities was the police force, and I am sure he handled that task with as much efficiency as does the present incumbent of that area of responsibility. I am extremely proud that the first member for the Kogarah electorate, which was constituted in 1930, was Mark Gosling. I am deeply honoured to hold a seat that was initially represented by Mark Gosling. To his sons, whom I knew very well, and other relatives I extend the deep sympathy of Mrs Crabtree and myself.

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF MARY MEILLON, MEMBER FOR MURRAY

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports [2.46]: I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of Mary Meillon, Member for Murray.

(2) That Mr Speaker convey to the family of Mary Meillon the deep sympathy of Members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Mary Meillon was a member of this House for almost seven years, succeeding her father the late Joe Lawson, who was member for Murray from 1932 until his death in August 1973. Mrs Meillon was elected on 6th October, 1973. Educated at Deniliquin High School and Hornsby Girls High School, Mrs Meillon was employed as a stenographer with the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, a secretary with the Farmers and Graziers Co-operative Company, a stenographer with the High Court, and a secretary on the staff of the New South Wales Parliament for seven years. She had a close association with the Country Womens Association, school committees and primary producer organizations.

Much of Mrs Meillon's success has been put down to the fact that she had the common touch and cared deeply for country people, in particular country women. This concern for country people, and particularly the people of the Murray electorate, was illustrated in her maiden speech when she established herself as a fighter for the people of the Murray Valley and for the importance of the Murray River to the people of the State. In particular, she highlighted the serious problems of salinity and pollution in the Murray.

In her seven years of parliamentary service she continued to be closely interested in a range of other issues affecting country people, including bush fire damage, plague locust infestation, water resources legislation, prickly-pear legislation, and wine grape processing legislation. In addition to these activities she served in this Parliament on the Library Committee, the Printing Committee, and as a member of the Select Committee Upon Aborigines. On behalf of the Government I extend to her husband Mr Keith Herber, her two daughters and her four grandchildren the sympathy of the Government at their deep loss.

Mr MASON (Dubbo), Leader of the Opposition [2.48]: I second the motion. On this occasion of sadness Opposition members join with the Government to express their deep personal loss following the death of Mrs Mary Meillon, and to extend sympathy to her husband Mr Keith Herber, her daughters Beth and Robin, and their families. Mary Meillon was born at Deniliquin in October 1919. She was educated at Deniliquin High School and later at Hornsby Girls High School. She has always had her heart in the southwest of New South Wales. Mary had been the member for Murray since 1973. She was one of the two women in the Legislative Assembly in the present Parliament.

Mary Meillon was an active member of the Deniliquin Liberal Party. Between 1948 and 1954 she lived in Queensland where she was actively associated with Liberal Party activities. Mary was elected to represent Murray at a by-election following the death of her father Mr Joe Lawson, who held the seat for over forty years. It was a great disappointment to members on this side of the House—I imagine that all members share this sentiment—that our late colleague did not achieve one of her ambitions, that by late 1981 the combined services of her father and herself in this Parliament and of family service to the people of the Murray region would reach and pass the half century. She looked forward to making this indelible mark in the records of this Parliament, but it was not meant to be.

Mary Meillon made a valuable contribution as a supporter of the Liberal-County party Government between 1973 and 1976, and later she had an important role in Opposition. Despite serious personal illness, and with great courage, she continued to represent her constituents in Parliament. One of her most outstanding characteristics, and one that I admired, was a complete and absolute dedication to the electorate of Murray. She lived and breathed for the Murray electorate and the problems of its people. All her energies and efforts were devoted to the service of the people in her electorate.

Though an outstanding local member, she had to contend with more problems than most representatives of country electorates. Because of its geography, Murray is one of the most difficult electorates to service. It extends along the Murray River and into the Western Division. She overcame those difficulties with ease and still found time to involve herself in the personal lives of a great number of people. Mary was not just a local member; she was also a friend to her constituents.

Honourable members will recall that prior to her election to Parliament Mary Meillon worked for seven years as an amanuensis to a number of members in the days before we were provided with full-time electorate secretaries. I know that the former members for Burwood and Vacluse, David Hunter and Keith Doyle, appreciated her efficiency and capabilities in attending to electorate matters. It should be remembered also that when the late Joe Lawson was the member for Murray, Mary acted as a personal link between him and the people of the southwest, and on many occasions was referred to as the acting member.

During her years in the House, Mary took an active interest in the problems of water conservation and salinity in the Murray River. In December 1977 she was appointed Liberal Party spokesman on conservation and water resources. She always battled for the small farmer, the disadvantaged, and for improvements in education and child welfare. During the years in which Mary Meillon was associated with this Parliament, both before and after her election, she was respected for her pleasant nature, devotion and electorate abilities. Even though her work took much of her time, she placed great emphasis on the importance of her family, both as a mother and grandmother. She saw family life as the basis for achievements in other spheres.

In the Murray area, the Lawson-Meillon legend will be remembered as the family maintained close contacts with the people and community organizations, including local councils, Country Women's Association branches and primary producer groups. She will be sadly missed in this Chamber. As a representative of a country electorate, I know that rural New South Wales has lost a good friend.

From the time of Mrs Meillon's election in 1973 until in 1978 she was joined by the honourable member for Vacluse she sat in this Parliament as the only woman member of the Legislative Assembly. However, being the sole female member was not a situation in which she revelled or of which she took advantage. Mary sat in the House as an equal, and was treated as an equal by her colleagues. At the same time, her presence did much to improve the position of women in politics in New South Wales. The record books would show the part she played in winning a place for women in this Legislative Assembly.

Towards the end of Mary Meillon's life I visited her on many occasions in hospital and never came away without being deeply moved by her courage in overcoming the pain she was suffering; a courage that extended throughout her whole life, that was exemplified in all she did, and that led to the respect we all had for her. Members of the Opposition, particularly those of the Liberal Party, mourn her, knowing that we share with all honourable members grief in the loss of a fine person.

Mr GORDON (Murrumbidgee), Minister for Lands, Minister for Forests and Minister for Water Resources [2.56]: I join with the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports, and all other honourable members in supporting this expression of condolence to the family of the late Mary Meillon. My first meeting with Mary Meillon occurred when Mr Al Grassby was a member of this Parliament and Mrs Meillon worked as his amanuensis. Al always spoke of Mary in glowing terms, admiring her efficiency and energy. Electorally, the former member for Murray was my next door neighbour. Our two electorates represent the State's biggest irrigation investment and between them grow nearly all the rice produced in Australia, as well as a variety of summer crops. The two electorates share three major problems: water supply, drainage and salinity. Notwithstanding our different party affiliations, we combined to initiate efforts to solve those problems.

Mary Meillon, like her father before her, could be relied upon to support water conservation projects anywhere in the State, although naturally her special interest was the Murray River. From the start of her political career, she never missed an opportunity to bring to the notice of the government of the day the needs of the people of her electorate. In her maiden speech in this Chamber on 7th August, 1974, she spoke at length about the magnitude of the river after which the electorate is named. On that occasion she brought to the attention of the House two grave problems that were affecting many settlers in the southern Riverina irrigation districts, namely, the serious salting of soil in the Wakool irrigation district and the drainage problems of the Berriquin district. Though her urgent plea for remedial measures seemed to fall on deaf ears at that time, it must be comforting to Mrs Meillon's family to know that she lived to see works that will restore the soils to full productive capacity in the course of construction.

The first stage of the Wakool-Tullakool saline control works was begun in 1978-79. This involved the lowering of ground water levels beneath an area of about 13 800 hectares of salt affected irrigation forms by pumping saline ground water from 24 tube wells through a 45 kilometre system of pipes to a solar evaporation area. Mrs Meillon was present at the opening of the saline control works at Buronga last year and had followed closely developments in the drainage works for the Berriquin district. Mary Meillon was always in close touch with the people of her electorate. She was affectionately known to her constituents as the Murray lass. Mary had a great love for the Murray River and the people living along it, and they returned her sentiments. I extend my sincere sympathy to Mrs Meillon's family.

Mr PUNCH (Gloucester), Leader of the Country Party [2.59]: I join with the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Minister for Lands, Minister for Forests and Minister for Water Resources in expressing to Mr Keith Herber and Mrs Meillon's two daughters our sincere sympathy in their loss. I express condolences also to the other members of her family, her brothers, whom a number of members have met over the years, and their families. Mrs Meillon was the first woman in twenty years to be elected to this House. That was a creditable achievement. Many honourable members and members of the public are of the opinion that too few women enter the Parliament, but those who do usually make a considerable contribution to its deliberations.

Mrs Meillon carried out her duties with great dedication, particularly during the long illness that culminated in her death, when she exhibited fortitude and earned the respect of all of us. When I visited the electorate of Murray recently I was keenly aware that the memory of Mrs Meillon that remained in the minds of most people in the area was the priority she gave to the welfare of the individual elector. That was her prime concern. Many honourable members put their electors first and give them precedence over every other responsibility. Mary Meillon did that.

The distance across the electorate, east to west, is about 400 miles. It runs along the Murray River. No connecting rail or air services exist. The only links between towns within the electorate are by road. To cover the electorate is a formidable task and most tiring for an honourable member who must travel over large distances. Yet, Mary Meillon did that over the period she held the seat, as did her father before her. All my colleagues in the Country Party offer their sincere sympathy in the loss of Mrs Meillon. The former honourable member for Sturt, who resigned just this morning, has asked me to include him in the message of condolence to Mr Herber and to the members of the family. Members of the Country Party wish to be associated with the words of other honourable members who have spoken in this motion of condolence.

Mr K. J. STEWART (Canterbury), Minister for Health [3.2]: I join with other honourable members in paying my respects to the family of the late Mary Meillon. I do so for a couple of personal reasons. I had not long been a member of the Parliament when Mary Meillon became my amanuensis. She looked after me and also Mr Al Grassby. Mary first joined the amanuensis staff as a casual and worked in a temporary capacity, called in when other staff members were absent through illness or for other reasons. Later, when a permanent position became available, there was some reluctance on the part of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to appoint Mary Meillon, because her father was a sitting Country Party member and she would be working permanently for members of other political parties. All those honourable members for whom she worked, as well as many other honourable members, approached the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and expressed their manifest trust in her honesty and integrity. They pointed out that her appointment to the permanent staff would be applauded by all honourable members. I am happy to say that she became a permanent member of the amanuensis staff. Honourable members reposed trust in Mary because of the loyal way in which she looked after all those on her panel. Everybody loved her. She was a great member of this House.

Mary Meillon looked after her electorate with incredible care. Much of her association with the electorate, and her knowledge and experience in it, came from caring for the political affairs of her father while he was the member for Murray. In October 1973 Mary followed family tradition when she succeeded her father as the member for the electorate of Murray. She won the seat in the face of almost impossible political odds. That was a testimony also to the loyalty and trust people had in the Lawson family and the dedication they had for Mary.

Mary was a great supporter of the dental technicians of New South Wales, as her father had also been. Mary followed his example. She believed that dental technicians should be afforded chairside status. She was highly delighted in April 1978 when by the passing of the Dental Technicians Registration (Amendment) Bill chairside status was extended to dental technicians in this State. In the gallery today sits Mr Reg Scott, the president of the Dental Technicians Association of New South Wales. His presence indicates the respect of his association for Mary Meillon. I thank him for his attendance during this condolence motion. The Parliament doubtless welcomes a representative from such an organization attending here this afternoon to show respect for the late Mary Meillon. We all loved Mary very much. We shall miss her. She and her father gave much to the traditions of the Parliament of New South Wales.

Mr CAMERON (Northcott) [3.5]: I want to pay my own warm personal tribute to Mary Meillon. I got to know Mary originally in the years when she served as an amanuensis on the staff of this Parliament. I think I got to know her best in more recent times when we so often sat together on that back bench. During late night sittings we would converse together, demonstrating between ourselves a commonality of approach to this Parliament at work. Though the remarks we sometimes made to each other would not always have been flattering to this institution, Mary Meillon loved this Parliament and regarded it as an honour to participate in serving here. As one of her parliamentary colleagues, I want to identify strongly with what Government members have said about her. The Deputy Premier has spoken of her having had a common touch. There can be absolutely no doubt that this was one of her distinguishing characteristics.

Mary Meillon saw people as individuals and she identified with them. There was never any kind of element in her thoughts that she was a parliamentarian and so was elevated above the people she was elected to serve. She stood with them absolutely

on the same horizontal plane, feeling that she was serving for their benefit. Also I want to identify with what the Minister for Health has said about Mrs Meillon. The Minister said that she was a person who generated in others implicit trust in herself. I was particularly warmed by what he said about the attitude that Labor members displayed towards her when she was an amanuensis of this Parliament. Honourable members will recall that when Mary Meillon first became a member of this Parliament she was hailed by the media outstandingly because she was a woman; that she came into this Parliament as the first woman member for twenty years; that she came here as a fifty-three-year-old grandmother; and that she was only the fourth woman to be elected to this Chamber. Her own approach to herself was so different. She did not identify herself as being different from other honourable members because she was a woman and, at that time—before the honourable member for Vaucluse joined us—the only woman member in this Chamber. She saw herself as one of the ninety-nine members of this House.

It was Mary Meillon's attitude to the family unit and her wholesome and very cohesive view of society—men and women together in it—that most commended itself to me. I can remember when she was interviewed by the news media soon after becoming a member of this House. On that occasion she was questioned about a number of things and she was quoted in this simple way: No, she told one interviewer, she did not support women's liberation, nor did she necessarily oppose it. Her belief was that if a woman wanted to carry a banner and did not interfere with anyone else's rights, she should be allowed to do so. But, if a woman wanted to stay at home she should be allowed that right also.

Mary Meillon was, before being a parliamentarian, a mother and a grandmother; she was a wonderful, superb person whom I admired enormously. I admired her humility and the fact that she did not pretend to master the intricacies of this House. If she was in difficulties, she was frank enough to approach somebody else for assistance, and I was proud that on a number of occasions she came to me. When she had a difficult speech to make she would get the advice of other people in order that she could better carry forward her central mission in life. That was not just to serve women in the community, though she did that magnificently, incidentally to being a parliamentarian.

Mary Meillon was committed to serving, above all, country interests, to being an expression of the country voice, the country feeling and country sensitivities and, particularly, that segment of the country that was so precious to her—the Murray. Mr Speaker, I can remember when Mary Meillon made her maiden speech. I was seated where you are sitting now, and I recall the impact that her maiden speech had upon me as she unfolded in detail her love for the Murray River. She was absolutely committed to her own family, which included the Lawson family, and to families in general.

I always had the warmest and deepest admiration for Mary Meillon's father, Joe Lawson, who served in this Parliament before her. He was a man of great humanity. When I came into this Chamber in 1968 as a young and untried member, I appreciated the paternal and helpful approach of Joe Lawson, whom I often met in strange places in this building where I had conversations with him. I shall not detail those places. He extended to me a warmth and affection that was most helpful. I join strongly in the tribute that this House will undoubtedly carry unanimously to Mary Meillon—a fine parliamentarian but, above all, a magnificent lady.

Mrs FOOT (Vaucluse) [3.11]: I join with previous speakers in paying tribute to Mary Meillon. Though I did not know her for as long as other members who have spoken today, I found her to be a woman of quiet courage and great dignity. She was what many women are striving to be today—a working woman and a family woman. She achieved both because she had a sense of proportion and a sense of humour. Also, she had the art of gentle reproof, which all who enter this Chamber should have. I experienced it early in my service in this Parliament when I attended one of the functions that it falls to the lot of parliamentarians' wives and women parliamentarians to attend. Someone said to me, "Are you the only woman in the House?" I said, "No, there are two of us; the other is Mary Meillon." Mary said, "No, the other woman is you, Rosemary." I pay tribute to Mary Meillon and I extend deepest sympathy to her family.

Mr KEANE (Woronora) [3.12]: As chairman of the Select Committee upon Aborigines, I pay tribute to the memory of Mary Meillon. She was a keen and energetic worker on that committee. She never failed to attend its meetings. I recall that when the committee was interstate Mary first gave indications of being unwell. Nevertheless, she insisted on continuing with the work of the committee. Mrs Meillon raised before the committee the important matter of Aboriginal people having land that may be adversely affected by development. It was because of her initiative in that regard that the committee took action to ensure that Aboriginal people who may be adversely affected by development over which they had no control would be safeguarded. I shall always remember that initiative of Mrs Meillon.

Mr ROZZOLI (Hawkesbury) [3.14]: I join with other honourable members in expressing my sympathy to Mrs Mary Meillon's family. I feel a certain kinship with her because I entered this Parliament following a by-election in the same year although at the opposite end of the year, as Mrs Meillon became a member. She could probably be described as being the most elected member of this Parliament, having faced four elections in five years. That must be close to a record. As other honourable members have intimated, Mrs Meillon set a wonderful example to all of us in the type of work that a local member should undertake. She had an extraordinary capacity to relate personally to people in her electorate. In recent weeks, as I have moved through her electorate, tying up some loose ends on her behalf, I have been conscious of the high regard in which everyone held her, irrespective of political convictions. That is the greatest accolade that any member of Parliament can be given.

Mary Meillon carried on the tradition of her father, Joe Lawson. That was not surprising, for throughout Joe's long career Mary campaigned and worked with him. They had an extremely close relationship. In Joe Lawson's latter years he knew that his continuance in this Parliament was due in no small measure to the energy and work of his daughter. Between them, they gave this House almost fifty years of family service. Perhaps Mary's greatest disappointment was that she was not spared to stay in the Parliament long enough to notch up those magic fifty years.

Mary Meillon had a great appreciation of the dignity and tradition of Parliament and its procedures. She brought a special dignity to party meetings and to the standard of language that was bandied round in them. It was typical of her that she did not tolerate behaviour or the use of language that she considered undignified in the often strained, heated and controversial atmosphere of party meetings. That was

the degree of dedication that she brought to every aspect of her work. She was a lovely lady. I am sure that all honourable members will join in expressing sympathy to her family, to her husband Keith and her daughters Robin and Beth. Beth is a constituent of mine. That is another tie that I feel I have with Mrs Meillon's family. I extend to them my sympathy and that of my wife.

Mr TAYLOR (Temora) [3.17]: I join with the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party, Ministers and other speakers in extending sympathy to the family of Mrs Mary Meillon. I do so for a personal reason. Naturally, being the honourable member for Murray, she was deeply concerned with the people of her electorate and was interested in the irrigation areas and districts. I had some contact with Mary Meillon in another context, for she displayed tremendous interest in and sympathy for residents of the Western Division and other western areas of this State. She travelled considerable distances to attend functions and meetings so that she could make a contribution to solving the problems of persons living in isolated areas. On the last occasion I saw her I knew that she was not well but I did not know how sick she was. She had travelled a long way to attend a meeting in the Western Division, to support what others were trying to do to improve the lot of the residents. I remember well that it was not an easy day for any of us; it was a hot summer's day, but she saw the meeting through. It was not until her funeral when I was talking to her brother that I learned how much she had suffered that day. I can say only that she did not show it. She made a contribution towards solving the problems of the people she believed in. I join with other honourable members in extending sympathy to her family. I am proud of having known someone who had the courage to attend a function under adverse conditions and to demonstrate that as a parliamentarian she cared for the people out there.

Mr MOORE (Gordon) [3.20]: I speak to this motion on behalf of my wife and for myself and my electorate secretary, who for a number of years worked with Mary Meillon, or Tibby as she was known, when she was a parliamentary amanuensis. My electorate secretary and her amanuensis colleagues of the late Mary Meillon would wish to have their sympathy conveyed to her family. When I first met Mary in 1976 she was somewhat suspicious of me for I was then young, tall and bearded, and apparently these attributes did not entirely accord with her ideas of the physical appearance of a male member of parliament. On some seven or eight occasions during the past three years I travelled with her in her electorate and came to know her well. When I was last with her in the Murray electorate in 1979 she made clear her pride in what she was able to achieve for her constituents. She said that her election to this House following a by-election and her return to it at a general election soon afterwards had been achieved as Joe Lawson's daughter, but in the subsequent elections she was elected in her own right as Mary Meillon, rather than in her father's shadow.

Early this year when Mary was in hospital I had the great pleasure to represent her at the Wakool debutantes ball where a number of young ladies aged 16 and 17 were presented to me. By reason of the generation gap, at times even I have difficulty in communicating with young people, and this problem could be even greater for people of Mary's age. Nevertheless, the young ladies and their partners, irrespective of their family political background, Liberal, Labor or Country Party, made known their affection for Mary Meillon. She had the love of all her constituents irrespective of the way they voted. Her philosophy was symbolized by the logo of a paddle steamer and the words "Murray Lass" on the driver's door of the cars she drove in Sydney and in her electorate. The only sign of anger I ever saw displayed by Mary

Meillon was over a matter of discrimination against women in this Parliament. I am delighted to see that it has been removed in the new building. She jocularly remarked that all the conveniences were labelled “members” or “ladies” and she was in two minds whether she should assert her right as a member of this establishment and use the members’ conveniences.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.24]: I wish to record my sorrow at the passing of Mary Meillon. I did not know her as a member of the Liberal Party as I do not attend that party’s meetings but I came to appreciate her qualities when she travelled to my electorate. I wondered how she coped with a constituency that is twice as lengthy as the 200 miles that my electorate extends. Mary had a love of people. During a brief period that I attended the Italian language classes that were held in this Parliament I observed her ready sense of humour and wonderful warmth. Through those classes I had the pleasure of meeting one of her daughters and one of her grandchildren. Since the last sitting of this House the Parliament has lost two members who had great warmth, a love for people and quiet sincerity—qualities possessed by real human beings.

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF NICHOLAS JOSEPH KEARNS, MEMBER FOR BANKSTOWN

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports [3.25]: I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of Nicholas Joseph Kearns, Member for Bankstown.

(2) That Mr Speaker convey to Mrs Kearns and family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Nicholas Joseph Kearns, known to us all as Nick, was born in 1920. He died suddenly last month while on holiday in the Northern Territory with his wife Doreen. Nick Kearns attended Belmore technical school and then joined the former Department of Railways as an apprentice fitter. He worked at Eveleigh and Chullora workshops and became a shop steward for the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which is now the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union, and later a member of the Transport Officers’ Association.

Nick joined the Labor Party in 1941. At various times he was branch president and secretary and president of the Bankstown State Electorate Council. On 3rd March, 1962, he was elected to this House as the member for Bankstown. In his maiden speech he demonstrated his life-long concern for the people and problems of his electorate. In particular he concentrated on welfare problems in what was then a rapidly expanding area. Foremost among these problems were the questions of transport and housing. Also in his maiden speech he outlined the personal philosophy that distinguished his parliamentary career. He expressed this philosophy by quoting this statement of Ben Chifley:

Within myself I am nothing. We cannot win elections unless from the ranks come strength, warmth, friendliness and loyalty to the Labor movement.

In concluding his maiden speech our late colleague said:

I hope that in the time I spend here, I may make some contribution to the advancement and welfare of this State and thus may bring benefit and progress to the people of Bankstown.

Nick's subsequent parliamentary career was a testament to these ideals. He served on the select committees upon the meat industry, fishing industry, and the disclosure of pecuniary interests of members of parliament. He was a member of the Parliamentary Library Committee and a member of the caucus committees on health, housing, lands, conservation, sport and recreation and tourism. This wide range of interests was reflected in his contributions to parliamentary debates.

It is perhaps significant that one of his final contributions to this Parliament was his speech on the Adoption of Children (Amendment) Bill on 6th March, 1980. This speech illustrated his depth of knowledge of the subject and his genuine concern for people and their problems. These qualities characterized his career. Nick had announced his intention to retire before the next elections. His death is a tragic loss to the Parliament and the people of his electorate. Nick Kearns' electorate of Bankstown adjoins the electorate of the Premier who has personally asked me to pay, on his behalf, a special tribute to Nick. On behalf of the Government I extend sympathy to his wife and son.

Mr MASON (Dubbo), Leader of the Opposition [3.29]: I second the motion. On behalf of the Opposition I join the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports in extending to Mrs Doreen Kearns and her family deep-felt sympathy at their loss and to record sincere appreciation of the service to this Parliament of Nicholas Joseph Kearns. All honourable members who have had the pleasure of serving in this House at the same time as Nick, as he was known, remember him with affection. He was held in the highest esteem. As the honourable member for South Coast said, Mary Meillon and Nick Kearns had qualities of warmth and humanity to which all honourable members responded. In March 1962 he entered this Parliament as the member for Bankstown following service to the Labor Party extending as far back as 1941. It is sad that he was not able to see the conclusion of the forty-sixth Parliament. He had announced his intention to retire before the next parliamentary elections.

All honourable members regret that Nick Kearns and his wife were not able to enjoy together the years that they had obviously planned following a hectic and devoted life to this House, at considerable personal sacrifice and cost. However, he was not to be given that pleasure and privilege. Nick Kearns rose through the ranks of the Labor Party. As he did he gained valuable experience by assisting his colleagues in marginal seats. Opposition members had a healthy respect for Nick's abilities in assisting members of the Labor Party who aspired to be members of this House. While the Labor Party was in opposition he was entrusted with the shadow portfolio of youth and community services. Prior to the 1976 elections he was involved in developing Labor Party policy in those areas.

Nick Kearns came to Parliament with a trade background in fitting and turning, and had all the qualities that come to a man privileged to work with his hands. He involved himself considerably in any activities that could be of help to his fellow man. As the Deputy Premier said, he was a member of the Australasian Transport Officers Association and the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union. They represent just two examples of how he gave effect to his concern for his fellow workers. It was during his period as a shop steward at the Chullora railway workshops that he became a much respected member of the Labor movement.

After his election to this Parliament Bankstown grew rapidly in residential and industrial stature, servicing one of the fastest growing areas around Sydney. Its massive growth and development increased the demands upon Nick. They took their toll on him. He always made himself available to his constituents. Much of his time was devoted to the many problems of the new Australians who became his constituents. For many of them Nick Kearns was their first real contact with the new culture and the first person to whom to turn with their problems. They found in him a great friend.

The universal judgment of Nick's parliamentary colleagues is that unquestionably he was a gentleman who was quiet, discreet and concerned about his fellow man. He was always immaculately and carefully dressed, was dignified in his behaviour and set an example to every member of this House by the manner in which he accepted his duties within the House and outside it.

One great compliment that must be paid to Nick is that he was always the same; he never changed to suit the occasion or the person. He did not use airs, graces or theatrics to present his point of view, but quietly and calmly spoke his mind. He was a person of whom we should say, "There was in him no guile". He was a man of integrity and honesty. He enjoyed the respect of all who were privileged to be associated with him. This House will be the poorer for the passing of Nick Kearns, a servant of the people of this State, a friend to all, enemy of none.

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [3.34]: I join the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in speaking to the sympathy motion for the late Nick Kearns. I extend to his wife Doreen and his son Marcus the sympathy of myself and my family. Nick Kearns had a long association with the Labor Party. He joined it in 1941 and held various positions, including branch president and secretary. It was not until 1962 that he entered Parliament, after a long membership, to earn his spurs as a member of this House. In addition to that, he had a good career in the industrial sphere. He was an apprentice in the Department of Railways. He worked at the Eveleigh workshops and Chullora workshops. He rose to the position of sub-foreman at Chullora in 1961-62. During his time as a union delegate he took a keen interest in union affairs. He was a member of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union and subsequently became a member of the Australasian Transport Officers Association.

The remarks of the Deputy Premier and Leader of the Opposition sum up Nick Kearns. He was a quiet, honest and good man. He had a rare distinction in that other members of Parliament looked upon him as a good example of a man trying to do a job for his constituents and for the benefit of New South Wales and Australia. Reluctantly he announced his proposed retirement as a member of Parliament as he felt, having served for eighteen years, it was time to have what I shall call a well earned rest and share more time with his wife and his son. All honourable members know that in the hurly-burly of politics time slips away from them and that too little time is available to spend with the ones they love. Nick's tragic end meant that he was not able to share with his wife and son some years in total retirement. I extend to his wife Doreen and his son Marcus my deep sympathy.

Although I joined Parliament with Nick Kearns, I knew him before coming here as a good man. He demonstrated that members of Parliament can carry out their functions in a manner that allows them to retain the respect of all their parliamentary colleagues. He certainly had the respect of his constituents. Nick's electorate adjoins mine. Last Saturday night when I attended a function in the Bankstown area many

people commented to me about the tragic passing of Nick Kearns. His memory will live with us. I hope his wife and his son will draw great comfort from the remarks passed here today.

Mr PUNCH (Gloucester), Leader of the Country Party [3.38]: I join with the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports and the Minister for Transport in paying tribute to Nick Kearns. I convey to Mrs Kearns and Marcus our deep sympathy. I have a vivid recollection of the first time that Nick Kearns walked into this Chamber. As he entered, the member then leading the Country Party turned to me, obviously aghast, and said, "He got in here anyway". He was referring to the fact that Nick Kearns was virtually the double of Jeff Houston, my Labor opponent at an election three years before. We thought we had got over that hurdle, but suddenly in walked his double. Nick and I often joked about that incident.

Nick Kearns' sudden death in the Northern Territory while on a holiday with his wife came as a great shock. Of all the members in this House, it was generally acknowledged that he was one of the most respected and most popular. He was close to his constituents. Whether in the Chamber, in his rooms in the House or outside Parliament, he was always pleasant, with a kind word for everyone. He never displayed animosity or hostility. Whether one came in contact with him here or out at the back of Bourke, one found him doing his job in the way he felt he should do it on behalf of the party he represented—a party of which he had been a member since 1941, when he was 21 years of age. Not many honourable members on either side of the House can claim a record like that.

Unfortunately, in recent years in this Parliament that friendly smile and happy knack of being pleasant at all times so often displayed by Nick Kearns seems to be disappearing more and more from the scene. His passing is a loss to every member of the House and to the people of this State. Though Nick Kearns had indicated he would be retiring, his sudden loss through a heart attack has robbed the Parliament—as his retirement would have done—of a member and of a friend. I feel sure that from time to time he would have come back here after his retirement to see his many friends among honourable members. At all times he would have been welcomed back here to have a drink and a chat. Because of the high regard and warm friendship that everyone felt towards him, on behalf of my colleagues in the Country Party I should like to convey to Mrs Kearns and her son our deepest sympathy in their sad loss.

Mr K. J. STEWART (Canterbury), Minister for Health [2.42]: I join with other honourable members in their expressions of sympathy. I came into the Parliament on 3rd March, 1962, as did Nick Kearns. His electorate of Bankstown adjoins my electorate of Canterbury. Between us we shared the hyphenated geographical name of Canterbury-Bankstown, which is a well-known district. Before I met Nick Kearns I came to know of him through my brother Frank, who was the member for Lang in the federal Parliament. His electorate encompassed the Canterbury electorate, the Bankstown electorate and the Lakemba electorate represented in this House.

Nick Kearns and I were employees of the Department of Railways at a time when it showed a profit. It might be said that in 1962 when he and I came into the Parliament it heralded the decline of the New South Wales railways. I might add that the honourable P. F. Cox, the Minister for Transport, worked in the Department of Motor Transport at a time when it, too, showed a handsome profit. Of the twelve members who came into Parliament in 1962, only three remain here. They are the honourable member for Davidson, the honourable member for Tenterfield and me.

A great personal friendship developed between Nick Kearns, myself and a number of other members. We formed ourselves into a gang of three or perhaps it was a gang of four, five, six or even seven, depending upon how one's fortunes fluctuated in those days. Nick Kearns was a great friend of mine, as he was to so many other members of Parliament. Because of that friendship our families became firmly bonded together. We had great fun together. He was a man who could relax and enjoy life.

I hope Parliament forgives me on this occasion for telling one of the classical stories that relate to some of my colleagues during our time in Parliament. Some years ago we accepted an invitation from Mr Al Grassby to tour the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. A big barbecue had been arranged for one evening to honour Gough Whitlam, who was then the leader of the federal Opposition. Some honourable members may know that when one is in company with Al Grassby in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, the programme is to start off early in the morning, and visit a number of clubs, have lunch at a club and then call in at ten or fifteen vineyards, testing all the whites and the reds and the tawny ports. During this particular afternoon we elected Nick to be our spokesman and told him that at the barbecue he would have to respond on behalf of the guests. Our tour took us from vineyard to vineyard. At the barbecue Gough Whitlam took up half the night with his speech and Al Grassby spoke for the best part of the other half and it was 11.30 by the time Nick got onto the stage. He stood up but could not pronounce Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Afterwards, we told him not to feel too badly about it as none of us could pronounce Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area either. It was just bad luck that he had been elected as spokesman on our behalf.

Nick Kearns was a man of great ability, some of which was untapped. It is of great regret that his ability was untapped in the Parliament. Those who knew him would know that his full potential was never realized and his ambition was never fulfilled.

He was a great friend of mine. He was a member of the health committee of the Parliamentary Labor Party with me. He was a great political thinker and a good sounding board. On many occasions he fortified me in the attitude of my attack, or made me resile from an attitude I was contemplating. Because of that, and for many other reasons, I shall miss him sorely.

I know that my colleagues who were in that gang of four, or five or six that I have mentioned will miss him just as much as I do. An intense personal relationship grew up between us. His passing is all the more sad as he said that he intended to retire at the end of this Parliament so that he and Doreen could live their lives quietly and in great happiness. Honourable members know how much wives and families of members of Parliament are deprived of our company. That makes Nick's passing much sadder. To Doreen and Marcus I offer my prayerful sympathy. Of Nick Kearns I say, may he rest in peace.

Mr HEALEY (Davidson) [3.46]: I should like to join with previous speakers in extending to Mrs Kearns and her son sympathy on this very sad occasion. As the Minister for Health has just said, only a few members are left of the 1962 Parliamentary intake. I am the last of the Liberal members of that group. Nick came in to Parliament at that time and in those early days we got to know each other fairly well. He was always a warm and friendly person. As a member of Parliament he displayed great interest in the welfare of the disadvantaged people in the community. Many of his speeches reflected that attitude, particularly when he was fulfilling the role of

shadow minister for youth and community services. Nick Kearns showed great understanding, empathy and sympathy for those people of whom he spoke. He was never a flamboyant person. He worked consistently and conscientiously for his electorate, his party, and the State.

Recently I had an unusual experience. I was holidaying on a cruise ship and sat at a dining table with a man and his wife who came from Bankstown. They knew my name, but until the end of the first week of the cruise they did not know that I was a Liberal Party member of Parliament. After that that man and his wife often talked about Nick Kearns and his wife. Obviously they knew them both well. As we parted I said to this man, "Next time you see Nick give him my regards". He said, "Well, a little later we will get together for a quiet lunch at the Bankstown Sports Club". On the cruise this man had been wearing the blazer of the Bankstown Sports Club. He left the ship before I did and got a taxi to head for his home at Bankstown. Before I had left the terminal this man returned. On his way home the taxi driver had informed him that Nick had died. Apparently, because of our many conversations in which Nick's name came up, this gentleman got the taxi driver to return to the ship so that he might tell me that my colleague had passed away in such sad circumstances. I am grateful that he did, otherwise I might not have found out until sometime later. Nick Kearns was a quiet and dignified man whom I respected very much. I was pleased to be able to call him a friend and a colleague.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs [3.48]: One of the richest rewards I have enjoyed as a member of this Parliament was that I could claim Nick Kearns as a close and warm friend. Like those who have spoken before me—indeed, like everyone else who ever met him—I know of no person who did not respect him and have great affection for him. This morning I could not help thinking of him and of today's ceremony without remembering a statement made many centuries ago by a great biblical teacher and philosopher who when philosophizing on death or dying, said:

The day is short, and the work is great, and the labourers are sluggish, and the reward is much, and the master of the house is urgent.

He further said:

It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it.

That made me think of Nick Kearns and that is why I have quoted that passage. He knew he was not going to complete his work but he never desisted from his duty and the things that he had to do. He looked after his people in the way a member of Parliament properly should do. He attended to the needs of those who wanted his help and gave his assistance so readily. He acknowledged the statement that he should not desist from it. There is still plenty to do for those who want to fight injustice. Nick Kearns went to his death having fought for those who were treated unjustly and always fought for whatever he believed to be right. I have no doubt that he will rest in peace. I know that his wife and son will derive great consolation from the great work that he did as a member of Parliament.

Mr BREWER (Goulburn) [3.51]: I join with those members who have paid tribute this afternoon to the late Nick Kearns. I had the great privilege of getting to know him when he served on the meat industry select committee of which I was chairman. He was a gentleman, a man of the kindest nature. After a day's work one could talk to him and depend on getting good advice and at the same time know that anything said to him would be kept in confidence. He was a man who put people

before party politics. He will be sadly missed in this Chamber. It was a great privilege to have known him and served with him. I express my sympathy to his wife and son and wish to let them know that all honourable members, irrespective of the side of politics to which they belong, had great respect and love for him.

Mr GORDON (Murrumbidgee), Minister for Lands, Minister for Forests and Minister for Water Resources [3.53]: I support the motion of condolence moved by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition and supported by other honourable members who have spoken. As most honourable members will recall, I entered this Parliament in a by-election in 1970. One of the members who assisted me in that election campaign was Nick Kearns. From that time a close friendship developed between us. During my first year in Parliament I shared with eight other members what we called the big room at the back. At that time Nick occupied what was, in comparison with what we had, a luxurious room that he shared with the member for Liverpool, Mr N. J. Mannix. Mr Mannix did not stand for the next election and Nick asked me to share that room with him and fit into the slot formerly occupied by Mr Mannix. This I did and for four years enjoyed a close relationship with Nick Kearns.

He was a good-natured man with a deep concern for others. His advice was always available and was given in a most objective manner. I often asked his advice. As the Minister for Health said, he gave good advice, and on occasions his counsel prevented me from doing something which could have turned out not so well and at other times he encouraged me to pursue a line which turned out for the best. His sincerity and loyalty to his friends were qualities to be experienced. He had a good sense of humour, but at the same time was a serious and resolute man. During the years we shared office accommodation I met his family and many of his friends and he, in turn, met members of my family. A standing joke between Nick and one of my daughters when she was expecting a baby was that if it was a boy it should be called Nicholas. Whether it was Nick's suggestion or not I cannot say, but it was a boy and he was called Nicholas. If he can emulate Nick Kearns he will do well.

Nick and Doreen visited my home on several occasions, generally to assist me in elections. As the Leader of the Country Party said, Nick's presence was always worth a few votes, for his friendly nature went down well with country people. He was always of great assistance to me at election times. He would turn up and stay with me for weeks on end. We were both members of the parliamentary select committee upon the meat industry. The honourable member for Goulburn mentioned an incident when Nick and I paid our first visit to a meatworks. We got to the start of the meat chain and had no idea what was about to happen. Suddenly, someone stunned a bullock and up it went on to the chain; another fellow hit it with a knife and out of the beast passed enough blood to fill a 44-gallon drum. Nick and I almost passed out with it. We stood back. Later, when we were having a cup of tea, the manager of the meatworks told us that the number 1 man on the meat chain was leaving next week and his job would become vacant. He asked would either of us be interested. We said no.

Later, when I was a Minister, Nick was a member of the caucus committee dealing with matters of my portfolio of conservation and water resources. His wise counsel was always of great assistance to me and to the committee. Nick Kearns was a man of the highest integrity. His death will be a great loss to this Parliament and the electorate that he served so conscientiously. He was a man who was liked and admired by everyone who met him. I join with other honourable members in offering the sympathy of myself, my family and my constituents who knew Nick to his wife Doreen and his son Marcus.

Mr COWAN (Oxley) [3.56]: While I have had the privilege of serving in this Chamber for a number of years I have observed the quality of people on all sides of the House. Nick Kearns was a man who was held in tremendous respect over the years. I was chairman of a parliamentary select committee upon the fishing industry of which Nick was a member. I recall that when I approached him and asked him to serve on the committee he said that he knew nothing about the fishing industry or the oyster industry. But Nick Kearns was a man who was down to earth. He could make right decisions. He knew something about marketing and he made a wonderful contribution during the period that he served on the committee. I am sure all honourable members present in the Chamber who served on the committee join with me in conveying our sympathy to the family.

Nick Kearns was a person who was accepted particularly well by his fellow men. Members of the select committee to which I referred will recall our visit to Western Australia and South Australia. I recall with pleasure a day when the honourable member for Wollongong, Nick Kearns and I visited the Barossa Valley for a break and enjoyed sampling wines at the various wineries. That was an occasion when we made lasting friendships. I join with all other members who have spoken in conveying my sympathy to Mrs Kearns and her son Marcus.

Mr CAHILL (Marrickville) [3.58]: I join with the Deputy Premier and other members who have spoken in support of this motion of sympathy on the death of Nicholas Joseph Kearns. From the time of his election in 1962 he proved to be a most diligent and able member for Bankstown. He constantly championed the causes of Bankstown and was delighted recently when the Bankstown municipality was granted the status of a city. Reference has been made to his speech on the Adoption of Children (Amendment) Bill. All honourable members will agree that he had a keen interest in the problems of physically and mentally handicapped people. He had a distinct ability to analyse the problems of various organizations and groups, to crystallize those problems and offer what seemed obvious and logical solutions that apparently no one else had thought of.

As members of this House we became close friends. As honourable members are aware, it is sometimes necessary to travel away during an election or by-election campaign. Quite often Nick Kearns and I went as a team to an electorate. Our most recent journey was in company with the member for Lakemba to the Castlereagh electorate. The three of us drove to the electorate together to make our contribution to the campaign. Nick Kearns would have been the first to admit that he was not a champion bowler but, because of his pleasant disposition and keen sense of humour, he was regularly asked to take his place in any parliamentary four that was invited to compete at any of the president's days that were being held. I was fortunate that Nick Kearns agreed to visit my electorate on many occasions and be part of a team of parliamentary bowlers. We did not win very often—in fact it was unusual for us to win—but no other team had as much fun as ours, and this was because it included Nick Kearns.

Mention has been made of Nick Kearns' activities as a member of various select committees. At times a number of informal meetings were held after the sittings of the House had concluded for the day. On those occasions Nick Kearns' observations of proceedings were greatly sought and always appreciated by those present. My wife and family join with me in expressing to his wife Doreen and son Marcus, to Kathleen and Michael Carroll and the McLaughlin family our deepest sympathy in their great loss.

Mr J. A. CLOUGH (Eastwood) [4.2]: I join the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members in their tribute to Nick Kearns, a man of conscience and conviction. During my short term as Minister for Youth, Ethnic and Community Affairs he was my opposite number, being shadow minister for the Opposition in those matters. At all times he was a keen adversary, hard working and loyal to his beliefs and his party. He was a gallant political foe whom every member admired. I join with other honourable members in paying tribute to him. I extend to his widow and son my deepest sympathy.

Mr DURICK (Lakemba) [4.3]: Because of the close association of our electorates, Nick Kearns and I were always great friends. The Lakemba electorate was created in 1927 as a result of the population explosion at that time in the Belmore, Lakemba and Punchbowl areas. The Canterbury, Lakemba and Bankstown electorates were then established in the area generally known as Canterbury-Bankstown. The Minister for Health said that a vintage group came into this Parliament in 1962. Some of those members are no longer with us. In recent years they held a social evening in March to commemorate that event. I was elected to this House in September 1964. Nick Kearns was one of the members who suggested that, as I was an electoral orphan, I should be adopted by the members of that class of 1962. In recent years I was fortunate to be among the group at that enjoyable annual celebration. Unfortunately, through the death of Nick Kearns and the resignation of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, since March of this year their numbers have fallen from eight to six.

It has been said that Nick Kearns loved company and, as the honourable member for Marrickville agreed, that was particularly so when he was playing bowls. Many of us shared his company locally or when he and his wife Doreen accompanied us to the annual interstate bowling carnivals. Indeed they were both with us at the most recent carnival in Adelaide earlier this year. As the honourable member for Marrickville said, Nick Kearns was with us during the recent Castlereagh by-election campaign. I recall the honourable member for Marrickville, Nick Kearns and I having a slight diversion at the Nyngan bowling club in that electorate. We rested from the hot, tiring task of door knocking. In playing in the twilight triples it is probable that on that occasion we did more effective electioneering than in all our door knocking throughout the electorate. If Nick had been with us next week, he would have been playing bowls with me in a parliamentary bowling four in a local event.

The assessment of those who knew Nick Kearns was that he had a great sense of humour and was rarely ruffled. I do not think I ever saw him lose his temper. He was able to summarize a situation quickly and realize its political implications, particularly if they were dangerous. He was a quiet worker for his constituents and, above all, he had a great love of his family. His life was not without its sad times. Those closely associated with his family will remember his traumatic experience following the accident his son Marcus had on the eve of Christmas some years ago. That accident happened when his son, being of the same frame of mind as his father, was doing someone a good turn in an area where he would not have been in normal circumstances. It is a blessing that Marcus survived that accident and is now able to help comfort his mother. It was once said to me that wherever one went through life, one should try to leave some mark of the contribution one has made to the community. That advice should be given to teachers, public servants and politicians. Certainly, Nick Kearns would be assessed by those who knew him as a man who made a great contribution to the area he represented.

Other honourable members have said that Nick Kearns made a great contribution to the quality of life of many citizens of New South Wales. That was evidenced by the interest he showed in adoption procedures and his activities in the field of youth and community welfare. It is probable that if one wanted to obtain the greatest testimony of Nick Kearns and what he did in his area, one need only speak to the aldermen and officers of Bankstown municipal council and those associated with the Bankstown sports club. He helped foster that club and took great pride in it. People associated with the Bankstown sports club thought the world of Nick Kearns. It is agreed generally that he made a great contribution to the areas he represented in this Parliament.

I shall miss Nick Kearns as a friend and parliamentary colleague. It is probable that I shall miss him more because I helped to plan part of the tour on which he departed and from which he did not return. He practised the great virtues of faith, hope and charity. Nick Kearns had a great love and consideration for his fellow man, particularly the underprivileged. May the good Lord give to him the eternal peace for which he has so quietly and nobly striven and, in the opinion of those who knew him, he so rightly deserved.

Mr ROGAN (East Hills) [4.8]: I join the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party and other honourable members who have taken part in the debate on this condolence motion. Nick Kearns will be remembered fondly and respectfully by all members who were privileged to know him as a friend and colleague. He did not make an enemy during the 18 years he was a member of this House. He was highly respected particularly for his principled stand on the issues on which he spoke. The number of honourable members who have taken part in this motion of condolence is indicative of the esteem in which he was held in this House. When the Government came to office in 1976 it was only by the narrowest of margins that Nick Kearns did not become a member of the Ministry. Prior to that time he had served the Opposition with great distinction, being its spokesman on youth and community services. Nick Kearns was highly regarded by members of his local branch of the Labor Party. During the 18 years he was a member of this Parliament it was never suggested that he would be opposed for pre-selection as the member for Bankstown. Recently, when asked what he thought the role of a parliamentarian should be, Nick Kearns said:

The person who seeks election to Parliament, especially if he is a member of the local Labor Party, must be prepared to devote his best efforts to ensuring both the economic and social well-being of the people he represents.

This I have tried to do. My success or otherwise is judged by the people of Bankstown.

I'm extremely grateful for the support extended to me over many years which, in turn, started at the ballot box at election time.

Asked why he had become a member of Parliament, he replied:

It is an extension of a lifetime interest in politics, an opportunity to participate in an important role of government and a means of working with, and for, the community, not only on community issues, but also many problems, major and minor, which cause concern and worry to the individual.

Nick Kearns was reared in Bankstown and resided there until his untimely death. He played a most active role in the great developments in Bankstown over the past 20 years. He was privileged to be the member for Bankstown at the time when the Queen

declared the Bankstown municipality to be a city. The electorates represented by Nick Kearns, the Premier and Treasurer, and me share the boundaries of the city of Bankstown. On behalf of the people we serve we have co-operated closely in assisting the Bankstown city council. I express on behalf of the mayor of Bankstown, the aldermen, and council officers and staff heart-felt sympathy at the loss of Nick Kearns. The large number of community organizations of which he was patron shows the high esteem in which he was held. He was patron of the Bankstown branch of the New South Wales Justices Association, Bankstown hospital, the Yagoona girl guides, the Bankstown district scouts, the Bankstown and district eisteddfod, Sefton High School Parents and Citizens' Association, Canterbury-Bankstown District Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations, Wattawa Heights Parents and Citizens' Association, Bankstown District Sports Club, Bankstown Trotting Recreational Club Limited, Bankstown Sports-Yagoona Bowling Club, Greenacre Bowling Club, Bankstown R.S.L. Club, North Bankstown Soccer Football Club, Yagoona Soccer Football Club, and the Bankstown District Soccer Football Club. Also, he was vice-president of the Bankstown District Cricket Association. I know that all those organizations would wish me to express on their behalf sorrow at the loss of Nick Kearns.

Nick Kearns was a kindly man who would not hesitate to assist those who sought his help. Perhaps it was partly the result of the great effort he made on behalf of his constituents that he has been denied his retirement. Although it might not be appreciated by people outside of the Parliament, it is a fact that parliamentary life denies a member the contact with his family that other members of the community are privileged to enjoy. This was certainly the case with Nick Kearns. My wife and I will miss him greatly. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Doreen and son Marcus.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [4.13]: I join my parliamentary colleagues in supporting this motion of sympathy. Other honourable members have spoken eloquently of Nick Kearns, his life and his achievements in this Parliament. All members of this House will mourn the loss of a great friend. Nick was a quiet man. Although he was a soft person he was a dedicated and effective member of this House. He served his constituents faithfully and well. All honourable members will miss his quiet smile, his clear insight into problems and the joy and inspiration that he gave us. Above all, he will be remembered for his genuine compassion towards his fellow man. We will remember him also for his readiness to assist people from all walks of life. To his widow Doreen and son Marcus, on behalf of my wife and for myself I extend heart-felt sympathy at the loss of their husband and father.

Mr MCILWAINE (Yaralla) [4.15]: I join all honourable members in paying a short tribute to Nick Kearns. Although I knew him for only a short time, I am well acquainted with his son Marcus through our work with the Public Service Association in which we were both office bearers. I and other honourable members on the Government side of the House who have recently become members of this House have appreciated the advice and assistance we received from Nick Kearns. Whenever I required assistance or when I had done something that Nick felt could have been done better, he always offered sound advice and guidance. I join with other members in expressing appreciation for that advice and assistance and in extending sincere sympathy to his wife Doreen and son Marcus.

Mr BANNON (Rockdale) [4.16]: Deliberately I sought to speak at the conclusion of the debate on this motion, and to do so from my place on the backbenches. Since 1962 Nick Kearns, like myself, was a backbench member of this House. During

his eighteen years of parliamentary service he, I, and many other members became close personal friends. Today many eulogistic remarks have been made about him by those members who have known him well, and I am sure that other members would like to voice their praise of him, too. It is not practicable for every honourable member to speak on a motion such as this, but I feel that I can without quarrel associate myself and each backbench member on the Government side of the House with the motion and offer to Doreen and Marcus our heartfelt sympathy.

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports [4.17]: I move:

That, as a mark of respect, this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 4.18 p.m.
