

MR THOMAS HENRY BATEMAN, MLA

Condolence Motion

DR G.I. GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [2.03 pm]: I move without notice -

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of Tom Bateman and tenders its deep sympathy to his wife, Jean, and his family.

Thomas Henry Bateman was born in Fremantle on 6 December 1922 - the son of George Arthur Robert Bateman, a farmer, and Ellen Jane Back. Tom was educated at Toodyay State School, Northam High School and also Perth Technical College. He married Jean Middleton on 3 July 1948 at the Methodist church in Donnybrook. Tom and Jean had four children: Jeff, Michael, Judy and Peter, who is deceased.

At the age of 16 Tom enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and served with the 10th Light Horse Regiment in the 2nd/2nd Commando Squadron. Following his military service, Tom worked in the mining industry in Kalgoorlie until 1948. He moved to Perth and worked for the courts and the Australian Whaling Commission until 1956. He then worked for the health department until his election to the State Parliament.

Tom was member of the Australian Labor Party in 1962. He was the president of the Riverton branch before entering this House as the member for Canning on 23 March 1968, where he served his electorate until his retirement on 8 February 1986. During his time as a member of this House, Tom was Chairman of Committees from 16 November 1971 until 31 January 1974 and he was the Labor Party Whip from 1977 to 1983. Having attended his funeral last week and talking to some former members of Parliament from both sides of this House, I know that Tom was admired for the way he worked in those positions. Indeed, the former Premier Sir Charles Court indicated how effective Tom had been as the Whip in the Legislative Assembly in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Tom was the secretary and the inaugural life member of the WA Parliamentary Former Members Association. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the association when he was the member for Canning. As the secretary, he represented members' interests with vigour. He was a valued, admired and respected member of Parliament. As a retired member, he actively pursued the causes of parliamentarians. All sides of politics respected Tom for his work.

Some other members of this Parliament and I knew Tom Bateman. He always gave me great encouragement and support in my political career. I enjoyed talking to Tom because he was a community person. Indeed, throughout his life Tom was active in many local community groups. He was a commissioner of the Lotteries Commission; program organiser for the Thornlie Probus Club; first president, life member and patron of the Thornlie Football Club; patron of the Mills Park Bowling Club; inaugural patron of the Thornlie Bowling Club; and a life member of the Thornlie Cricket Club. Members who travel through the southern suburbs will see the legacies Tom Bateman has left as a local member and as a supporter of the community. Tom's contribution to the Australian Labor Party, his service as the member for Canning and his ongoing work in the community will always be remembered with gratitude and admiration.

In his eulogy, his former parliamentary colleague and friend Dave Evans said that the theme of Tom Bateman's life was helping people. He was a friend to all. He was a truly generous, soft-hearted and good-humoured man. On behalf of all members of this House I extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Jean, and his children, Jeff, Michael and Judy, and their families.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.07 pm]: I support this condolence motion in memory of Tom Bateman. He will be remembered by present and former members of Parliament as a very respected member of this House. He served as a member for 18 years and was a very popular representative for the district of Canning. He was one of a sadly diminishing generation of Australians who served overseas in the Australian Imperial Force. It is notable that he subsequently served in the Army Reserve for 20 years.

He had a varied working life in which he worked as a mine engine driver, clerk, paymaster and administrative officer. When Tom Bateman contested the seat of Canning in 1968 for the Australian Labor Party, it was notorious for having returned a fresh member of the Legislative Assembly at each election since 1947, either through the swing of the electoral pendulum or through redistribution. The seat sprawled across the south eastern metropolitan area and included all of the current Riverton, Thornlie and Southern River electorates plus other territory. Tom Bateman captured the seat by 119 votes, overturning the late Ross Elliot's margin of 146 votes in 1965. Three years earlier the winning margin for the ALP had been 186 votes. It was an electorate that did not encourage long political careers. By 1971 it had the largest enrolment of all districts, yet in that year Tom Bateman held Canning by a massive majority and repeated his success three years later in an election less

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favourable to his party. In subsequent elections until his retirement he was never in danger of defeat. Much of the reason for this success was his hard work and kind, unassuming personality.

Tom Bateman was highly regarded by his opponents in this Parliament as a thorough gentleman who never descended to personal abuse and never let political differences stand in the way of friendship or comradeship. Former Liberal members who served with Tom remember him with great respect and affection. Thanks to the efforts of Tom Bateman, the former members association became a reality and it has been well supported. I did not know Tom Bateman, but I am aware that many current and former Liberal members knew him very well and, on their behalf, I express our condolences to Mrs Jean Bateman and to Tom's children and grandchildren.

MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [2.11 pm]: On behalf of the National Party I also contribute to the condolence motion for the late Thomas Henry Bateman. I and the members of the National Party want to be added to the list because Tom was a respected individual and member of Parliament who will be remembered in this place with a great deal of affection. Tom was a dedicated politician for 18 years and he is acknowledged for his fine contribution as Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker between 1971 and 1974. Perhaps one of the most enduring features of his political life is his contribution to community groups, particularly in his Canning electorate, and to sport, most notably football, in the wider district. I recognise the matters that the Premier also raised.

One of Tom's most cherished personal achievements was the establishment of the Thornlie Football Club in the early 1970s. Tom was the inaugural president of that club and he will long be remembered for his work with local football and community groups in general. Tom retired from Parliament in 1986, the year I was elected. The National Party extends its condolences to the Bateman family.

MS S.M. McHALE (Thornlie - Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth) [2.13 pm]: I have known the Bateman family for over 20 years and I have had the pleasure of getting to know Tom more closely over the past nine years. Tom was a member of the ALP's Thornlie-Gosnells branch until his death. He remained until his passing a solid Labor supporter and a loyal and dedicated member of the local community. He was, as members have said, very involved - again right up until his death - with the Thornlie Football Club, the Probus Club of Thornlie, the Thornlie Bowling Club and the Thornlie Cricket Club. Whenever there was a need in the community, Tom was there. He is known with respect and affection as a great local community member. He was always prepared to help. As a mark of his involvement, the City of Gosnells has named its baseball facilities the Tom Bateman Reserve, and this will be a permanent legacy to his wonderful contribution.

Tom was a mentor to several subsequent members of Parliament, including the members for Southern River and Riverton and me. He would often come into my electorate office with requests for help from constituents. Some of those requests required more than parliamentary involvement; some required a miracle and even then they may have been difficult to deliver. Nevertheless, Tom would say to me "You can only do your best, love - that's all they want and that's all they expect you to do". Tom, if you are listening, I will do my best for my constituents, which is what we all attempt to do. Tom will be deeply missed, but he will be remembered as a lovely kind and gentle human being who was just, loyal and a great Labor member of Parliament.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland - Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [2.14 pm]: I briefly join with my colleagues in offering my condolences to the Bateman family. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend Tom's funeral last week because I was in the north of the State. I particularly want to pass on my condolences to Mrs Jean Bateman and to Jeff, Michael and Judy. I had the pleasure of getting to know their husband and father in recent years and want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues. Tom was very much a gentleman. I had communications with him in relation to the former members association and other matters. Tom was the kind of member who is an inspiration to all members of this House. Certainly, he was a fine gentleman and I am delighted to have known him.

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Tourism) [2.15 pm]: Likewise, I offer my condolences to the Bateman family. I speak of Tom not as a member of Parliament, but as a bloke that I knew very well. My children grew up around the Thornlie area and attended the football and cricket clubs of which he was proud to be the founder. He left a wonderful legacy to that area in the Tom Bateman Sporting Complex. He not only was very involved in its establishment but also donated a major portion of the land. I had the great privilege of working with Tom Bateman as the president of the Thornlie Rotary Club and during the establishment of the Probus Club in that area and the Tom Bateman Reserve. Tom was a fine bloke. He was one of those people we meet in life who puts his country and community before himself. He will be fondly remembered by my family, including my son and daughter, both of whom were involved in organisations he founded. We are the sadder for losing him but the better for having known him.

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MR J.L. BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [2.16 pm]: I also pay tribute to the late Tom Bateman. He was in Parliament when I arrived. One of the things I appreciated about Tom was the way he conducted himself in this House and Parliament. I guess many of us could take a leaf out of his book. He was always friendly and always had a smile and a word of encouragement. He was obviously held in high regard in his community. It was mentioned at his funeral that he was a quiet achiever. He did not carry on with great gusto; he was quiet but achieved what he set out to do. He was a great person to know, and it is sad that he has gone. I know that the past couple of years were pretty hard for him. He suffered from some medical conditions a couple of years ago. It was great to see him at a bowls carnival in Adelaide earlier this year. Although he certainly was not as fit and able as he had been, he had the courage to attend that carnival, an event in which he loved to participate. I also pass on my condolences to Jean and his family.

Question passed, members standing.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in my gallery of the new Italian Consul.

[Applause.]