

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Murray Criddle; Mr Tom Stephens; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Cheryl Davenport; Hon
Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Mark Nevill; Hon Bill Stretch

CALDWELL, HON JOHN NORMAN

Condolence Motion

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [4.03 pm]: I intend to move the motion. I move -

That this House expresses its deep regret at the death of John Norman Caldwell, a former member of the Legislative Council for the Agricultural Region; and places on record its appreciation for his long public service, and tenders its profound sympathy to his wife and members of his family in their bereavement.

John Caldwell served in the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia as the member for South Province from 1986 to 1989 and as an inaugural MLC for the Agricultural Region from 1989 to 1993. He was a conscientious representative of rural electors and of the great southern area of the State in particular.

John Caldwell was born in Katanning in December 1934. He was educated at local primary schools and at Scotch College and returned immediately to the long-standing family farm at Badgebup. As a farmer and stud breeder he was a member of the Merino Breeders Association, the Katanning and Nyabing Agricultural Societies and of course the Western Australian Farmers Federation. John Caldwell was keenly dedicated to rifle shooting, representing Western Australia on five occasions and winning the Duke of Edinburgh award in 1975 when the Western Australian team defeated the team from Britain. I understand that that was a very significant achievement. Not surprisingly, he was President of the Great Southern Rifle Association from 1979 to 1986. The biographical register notes that he played in dance bands and concerts for many years. It shows how John Caldwell was a man who contributed to local community life.

In 1986 he captured a South Province seat for the National Party, narrowly defeating Hon Tom Knight in a classic three-cornered contest. I remember that particular election very well indeed. I think Tom Knight was a long way in front in the primary vote but the combination of the Labor Party and the National Party saw him defeated. That is what occurred in those days in those provinces. As members would be aware, under the old province system members had a six-year term, and there were two members, one up for election every three years. When John Caldwell defeated Tom Knight, it was the first time since the 1960s that the National Party had won that particular seat. At that time it consisted of the Legislative Assembly districts of Albany, Stirling and Katanning-Roe.

The redistribution of Legislative Council boundaries saw most of this province absorbed into the South West Region. That occurred under the 1987 change to the electoral system. Nevertheless John Caldwell was re-elected to the Legislative Council in 1989 as the second candidate on the National Party ticket for the Agricultural Region. After that election in 1989 he served as Secretary of the Parliamentary National Party and as the National Party shadow minister for lands, tourism, the arts and the aged. He retired at the 1993 election and was succeeded by Hon Murray Criddle in the Agricultural Region. Although John Caldwell did not have a long career in this House, he successfully made the transition from the former electoral system to the current regional system, under which he represented a far wider area. He contributed to the work of the Legislative Council as a member of a number of committees ranging from standing orders and legislation to select committees into salinity and agricultural education. His committee service showed his concern for the rural community.

When I think about John Caldwell I recall his great dignity and his quiet approach to things. Nothing ever seemed to be too much trouble or to make him aggressive or angry. He always took the situations that occurred in this House in his stride. I found him always to be a very accommodating person with whom one could discuss matters and reach agreement readily. I always considered him to be a wise person. He seemed to have a very strong understanding of issues and of human relationships. In that sense he was a very friendly person in that he was very easy to get along with and very accommodating of the needs of other people in the community and in the House particularly.

It is fair to say that he will be remembered as a good man, as a good representative of his constituents and as a good legislator. He left a widow, three children, grandchildren and his mother. A private funeral has already been held. I understand that a memorial service will be held in Katanning today. I indicate to his family on behalf of the Government that they have our sympathy on his passing.

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [4.09 pm]: Quite obviously it was a great shock to me last Wednesday when I heard that John had passed away. I learnt from phoning his wife Francine recently that his family felt the loss of John very deeply. Certainly they will miss John. As the Leader of the House has already said, he was a kind and gentle man. He certainly treated the people in his electorate in that way,

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although he was very serious about his work. It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise on this day when the memorial service is held. My colleagues Hon Murray Montgomery and Hon Dexter Davies are attending the funeral service. When I phoned his wife Francine I pointed out that I wanted to be here to make these few comments on the work that John did not only in the Parliament but also in his constituencies of South Province and Agricultural Region. John has left behind his mother, Mel; his wife, Francine; and his family.

John was born in Katanning - a local man - and after going to Badgebup and Katanning Primary Schools, he came to Perth and attended Scotch College. John, unlike so many of us nowadays, then returned farm where his two sons and daughter still farm, although one son lives a little way from the family farm. John was a devoted father to his daughter, Debbie, and to his sons, Peter and Michael, and a much-loved grandfather to his seven grandchildren, and they will miss him greatly. It is fortunate in some ways, although sad to say, that John was able to spend some time with his extended family after leaving Parliament, and we all need to recognise the importance of doing that.

John married his wife, Francine, in 1960. Francine was always with John. I remember meeting them from time to time, and they always had a smile and were willing to have people in their home. When I spoke to Francine to say that I could not come to the funeral, she said to make sure that I called in when I passed by. My wife and I will certainly do that. My wife is at the funeral today to represent our family.

One of John's great loves was rifle shooting, which he took up when he left school, and in which he excelled. In 1979, he captained the Western Australian rifle shooting team which defeated the Great Britain team, and I am sure he was cheered along the way in that victory. He represented Western Australia on five occasions in all, three times as captain, which points to the fact that he also had leadership qualities. John won the Duke of Edinburgh Award in 1975 and 1980, and the Grand Aggregate Award in 1980, and was President of the Great Southern Rifle Association from 1979 to 1986. John represented Western Australia in an administrative capacity not only in the eastern States but also on trips overseas, and that shows that not only did John get enjoyment out of rifle shooting but also he was prepared to put some effort back into that sport. John also played cricket and football, although he was not so good at football.

John was passionate about music, and I have attended various functions where John played the saxophone. John also played the clarinet and the piano. He and his mother, Mel, formed the Caldwell band when he finished school, and he continued to play at local dances and to entertain people in his area at concerts for about 40 years. John was a community-minded person and was always the life of the party. He always had a joke and a smile whenever I saw him. He was involved in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne and was in the crowd to cheer people on. He represented Western Australia and was keen to see our teams do well at both the local and national levels.

John was widely respected as a merino sheep and cattle breeder and had a great influence in his area from the point of view of the rams and bulls that he bred and the females that went into the various flocks and herds in his area. His contribution to the animal industry was great. He was a member of the Merino Breeders Association, once again putting back into the industry as much as he got out of it, and of the Western Australian Farmers Federation, an organisation that needs representation from all country people if they can possibly be involved. John was more than prepared to do that. John was a patron of the Katanning Agricultural, Pastoral and Horticultural Society and of the Nyabing Agricultural Society, and he was a member of the Kan-Work Options Centre in Katanning. John was well and truly involved at a local level and was one of those country men who become involved in community affairs across the board.

It is history now, as the Leader of the House said, that John played a significant role in the 1986 state election. I was involved at a lower level of the National Party in those days, which is when it was just starting to come back together. John was prepared to get in and help the party at that time, and he never had any intention of going into Parliament and went into that election with the assurance that he would not win. However, he led a strong campaign and was successful. He was a reluctant politician, although when he got into this place and had the responsibility put upon his shoulders, he took it very seriously. John held a seat in the South Province from 1986 to 1989 and then in the Agricultural Region from 1989 to 1993. I had the good fortune and privilege of following on from John in the Agricultural Region when he decided that it was time for him to step aside and let somebody else take over, and I thank him for his contribution to this forum.

During John's political career he was shadow Minister for Lands, Tourism, the Aged and the Arts from March 1989, Secretary of the Parliamentary National Party from March 1989, and Deputy Chairman of Committees from 1988. He was a member of the Standing Orders Committee from 1986, the Joint Committee on Delegated Legislation from 1988 to 1990, the Legislation Committee from 1990 and the Constitutional Affairs and Statutes Revision Committee from 1990. John was a member of a number of select committees, including the Select Committee inquiring into the Sale, Closure and Future Resiting of the Midland Saleyards in 1986, which I

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imagine would have been quite a controversial issue at that time, as it still is today. John was also a member of the Select Committee on Agricultural Education in 1987-88, the Select Committee on Salinity in Western Australia in 1987-88 – salinity being one of the most important issues confronting this State at this time - and the Select Committee on Defacto Relationships in 1989-90.

John retired from politics in 1993 and left it to those people who he thought deserved or needed an opportunity to come into this Parliament. I have been pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to take the place that he left vacant. John's memorial service was held today, and all of his National Party colleagues would have been there. I am sure that would have been a great event. I am not so sure that it would have been all that sad, because although I know a lot of people would have said they will miss him greatly, I am sure his enjoyment of life would have come through.

John will always be remembered as a true gentleman and as a person whom we could trust. He was very genuine and cared about people in country areas, and one of the big legacies that he will leave is the way he represented his constituency with his full ability and with a keen interest.

HON TOM STEPHENS (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [4.19 pm]: On behalf of the Opposition, I rise to be associated with the condolence motion moved by the Leader of the House and seconded by the Leader of the National Party in this place, and to express on the official record the condolences of members of this place and the deep respect that we had for John Caldwell, and to insist that our expression of condolence be relayed to his family according to the custom of this House; that is, through this formal condolence motion.

The advice to the House of the death of Hon John Caldwell delivered by the Administrator only yesterday came as a shock to me as I was not aware of his passing. I served in this place upon the arrival of Hon John Caldwell following his defeat of my good friend Hon Tom Knight. I listened to his maiden speech and to many of his contributions in this place. I became friendly with him, as was inevitable with anyone who knew him. I listened to his final speech in this place, and, regrettably, I had little contact with him after that time.

Opposition members, who found him to be the most affable and agreeable of colleagues, share in the sadness expressed by the Government at his passing. The inaugural speech of Hon John Caldwell was delivered to this place on 26 June 1986. Some of the character of the man became immediately evident to those of us who listened to that presentation. He raised issues to be expected from a man with his connections with the people of the Agriculture Region. He also put on display his close association with his family and referred to the support he cherished from his wife, Francine. He gave heartfelt thanks to his wife and family for their support in his transition from farmer to a member of this place. As mentioned earlier by the Leader of the House and the Leader of National Party, his parliamentary life had many memorable features. He formed close friendships with people like Hon Fred McKenzie and Hon Beryl Jones, who served with him on the Select Committee on De Facto Relationships. It was notable that, despite his hearing problem, he would go out of his way to listen to what one had to say and then regularly let one know whether he agreed or disagreed in a most affable manner. In his farewell speech in this place on 3 December 1992 he stated -

Before entering politics I considered that I was a mild mannered guy. However, when I entered this place I realised that I had to change my ways and be a fairly aggressive person. I consider I have failed in that regard.

That was true! He failed as he did not become an aggressive colleague. He further stated -

I have found it rather difficult to criticise members, and that applies to those on my side of the House and on the Government's side.

That also was true. He did not engage in the type of behaviour that others like me fall into from time to time. I repeat his final interesting observations as they have some political moment. After making other observations, he said -

My other political observation is for all those people who will be elected next year: I suggest that they should fight like hell to become a member of a Bob Pike select committee. New members must experience the cut and thrust of a Pike committee to really appreciate politics. If any member gets on Mr Pike's committee, I am sure he or she will then understand what politics is all about.

That comment has some resonance for those of us in the Chamber at this time, particularly in the current stage of the political cycle concerning the advantage of getting on with the House's business. Prior to the honourable member concluding his final remarks, he expressed gratitude to his wife, Francine, and to his family for their support. The Opposition sincerely expresses its sympathy to Francine and the extended family of Hon John

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Caldwell. We salute him in tribute to a parliamentarian who well represented the people of his electorate and his party, and we wish that he rest in peace.

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan - Attorney General) [4.26 pm]: I join other members in honouring the life of Hon John Caldwell. The degree of affection in which he was held is clearly expressed in the comments of all speakers today. I was his colleague on the first legislation committee, which was chaired by Hon Garry Kelly, and of which Hon Cheryl Davenport was also a member. They were difficult days for a number of reasons. First, we were working out our role and much time was spent deciding what we should do. It is easier for members once the role of a committee is determined. Being the first committee was difficult. Also, we had very little in the way of support. Members today have no idea how hard it was. The work was hammered out and carried out by the committee members, as we did not have a report served up which was then discussed.

To our eternal regret, the committee did not travel very much. When committees had the opportunity to travel, we were deep in the bowels of Parliament House writing our reports. We worked well together and established camaraderie in working to achieve a result; therefore, it was a very satisfying time for us all on the committee. John was a very good member of that committee, and he was the life of the party on one trip we had to New Zealand. It was good having him along. In fact, I knew him to be the life of the party on a number of occasions: He would play the saxophone and clarinet without even the slightest invitation and, despite being partially deaf, he could play in tune very competently. I refer to another aspect of his deafness. When Hon Derrick Tomlinson and I first entered Parliament, we sat behind Hon John Caldwell.

Hon Tom Stephens: Did you cause his deafness?

Hon PETER FOSS: I was about to raise that point. He would sit in front of us, and every now and again his hearing aid would resonate. Most people would have come across a resonating hearing aid, which creates a high-pitched whistle. If Hon Derrick Tomlinson or I stood up to speak, particularly Hon Derrick Tomlinson, Hon John Caldwell's hearing aid would resonate and whistle, and he would turn it off completely. He was usually the only member left sitting in front of Hon Derrick Tomlinson and me when he spoke, because he was the only member who could manage the decibels!

John Caldwell told a joke. I am sure this is not true. However, he said that when the National Party went through a preselection process, whoever lost had to stand for Parliament! He would certainly regard that as happening to him in this case. It is very good to have in the Parliament people who do not want to be politicians. One of the great qualifications to be a member of Parliament is to be here, not because one wants to be a member of Parliament but because one has a sense of duty and obligation. People in that latter category - I put Hon John Caldwell there - have a tremendous amount to give to the Parliament by way of a straight-out genuine contribution. It leavens the rest of us, as the fact that everybody here liked John and regarded him as a friend and an affable person who added to the general feeling of goodwill in this place. It meant that he was able to contribute so much. The collegiality and comradeship that I experienced with John, especially as members of the Legislation Committee, was one of the great privileges that I have had. I look back on that as a time of great achievement and great satisfaction. I believe all the committee members felt that way. John played no small part in it because of his character, humour, goodwill and general feeling of peace that he brought as the honest broker between all of us.

I was shocked and saddened to hear of his death. However, as Hon Murray Criddle said, people will celebrate his life rather than just mourn him because he did much to be celebrated.

HON CHERYL DAVENPORT (South Metropolitan) [4.32 pm]: I too would like to place on the public record and to offer my deepest sympathy to John's wife, Francine, and to his family. I also echo the words of other people who have spoken to this motion today.

The word that springs to my mind in relation to John Caldwell is "jolly". He was always happy and friendly and was very committed to his family and his community. When I first came into this Parliament in 1989 my son was a very young man. He met John early in the piece and from then on John always asked after Ross - what he was doing and how he was coping with the lifestyle that we were leading. John very much understood about having to be away from one's family.

Like Hon Peter Foss, I have very special memories of him on the Legislation Committee and, yes, we were a committee that did not travel much. However, I remember two occasions when we did travel, once to New Zealand and once to Albany, in relation to the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Bill. However, the trip to New Zealand was the most memorable because of an almost surreal evening we had in a Chinese restaurant in Auckland. That was when we all came to know how much John loved music. In that restaurant old-time dance music was playing and it just did not seem to be the place for it. However, I persuaded John to get onto the dance floor. Being a country girl, I was brought up with old-time dance bands. John told us a great deal that

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evening about his time as a member of a country dance band. In my teen years and early twenties that was very much the sort of entertainment that we had at country dances. I have never forgotten tripping the light fantastic with John Caldwell; it was a great experience. Despite his deafness he was a wonderful dancer. He could turn his efforts to most steps and he and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves that evening.

He was a very genuine human being and I know he will be sadly missed by his National Party colleagues and by his community. However, they will probably share my view that he was a jolly person and a very fine human being with whom I am pleased to have been able to serve in this place.

HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan) [4.34 pm]: I too associate myself with this condolence motion. I regard Hon John Caldwell as one of the finest gentlemen with whom I have served in this place. Hon Peter Foss put on public record the effect of my voice upon Hon John Caldwell's hearing aid. When we were in Opposition I occupied the seat now occupied by Hon Cheryl Davenport and, as Hon Peter Foss pointed out, Hon John Caldwell sat directly in front of me. I got used to standing to calling "Mr President" and watching Hon John Caldwell start and turn off his hearing aid. I was never quite sure whether he was turning me off completely or simply deadening the sound. He assured me he could hear everything I said with his hearing aid turned off. I came to believe that when for a short while I was shadow spokesperson for Justice for the Liberal Party and Hon John Caldwell was the shadow spokesperson for Justice for the National Party. At that stage we were not a coalition in Opposition. Occasionally I would stand and say words to the effect, "The Opposition agrees with this piece of legislation." Hon John Caldwell would simply turn, give me a quizzical look, say nothing and I would be corrected and say, "The Liberal Party supports this piece of legislation." Hon John Caldwell would invariably follow me and say, "The National Party likewise supports this piece of legislation." I was therefore always comforted that, although Hon John Caldwell turned me off in the sense that he turned off his hearing aid, he heard every word I said.

Both Hon Cheryl Davenport and Hon Peter Foss have referred to the work that we did as members of the initial Legislation Committee. That committee, which was chaired by Hon Garry Kelly, was the best committee on which I have served in this place. It was the first time I experienced a group of politicians from the whole spectrum of politics of the day - the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party - with diverse views, coming together and dealing with legislation impartially and trying to find the best solution. If we came to the legislation with a different philosophical perspective, we sought always the best solution. It was a model of how this House should work when reviewing legislation. Some of the reports that the committee produced are testament to the quality of impartial consideration by all parties.

Hon John Caldwell always brought to our discussions an earthy wisdom. I can hear him saying so many times, "I don't know why I am in this place." All members ask themselves that question. Some members ask it more frequently than others and sometimes we are never quite sure of our own answer to ourselves. I know why Hon John Caldwell was in this place. He brought to this place earthy wisdom, dignity and the willingness to listen and to learn.

I do not think he had enemies; he was not the sort of person who made enemies. I regard him very highly indeed and I mourn his passing. I celebrate the time I shared with him as a colleague in this place and I join in this motion of condolence to his wife and his family.

HON MARK NEVILL (Mining and Pastoral) [4.40 pm]: I add my condolences to those already expressed to the family of John Caldwell in today's motion. His death was certainly untimely. I am reminded of a *Reader's Digest* article I read about 20 years ago headed "It's later than you think". Premature deaths always bring home to me that thought.

John Caldwell was always a gentleman in this Chamber, someone we could call genuinely charming. He never said a rash thing. His comments were usually very thoughtful and generally understated. He was someone we knew we had to listen to and he was always good humoured. Anyone who could knock off Tom Knight in South Province, who was a very political person - I do not think John Caldwell was a political person - must have been of very high standing because Tom Knight was no slouch when it came to getting around electorates and working the traps.

Perhaps one of my fondest memories of John Caldwell was when he won the inaugural spiel award in 1989 for the Society for the Prevention of Injury to the English Language. He managed to clean up the rest of the House that year. I think someone referred to "the devil incarnate" and it came back in *Hansard* as the devil in Karnet Rehabilitation Prison. Max Evans chimed in, when discussing the traffic jams at the West Perth subway, that the bottleneck was at the top of the bottle, but he did not win. In the same debate Graham Edwards described some overhead power lines at the West Perth subway as a visual eyesore. John won the award that year with a mixed metaphor when he referred to someone, not as being "green about the gills or wet behind the ears" but as being "green behind the ears". He won a brown paper bag, which was popular in political circles that year. However,

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that bag did not have a wad of money in it; it contained a bottle of Scotch whisky which I am sure he enjoyed. I have very fond memories of him.

HON W.N. STRETCH (South West) [4.44 pm]: I wish to add my condolences in this motion. I speak more of John as a farmer in the great southern region, which interest we shared. The House has been regaled with stories and anecdotes of his time here. It is fitting to say that probably his greatest legacy to the House was his innate commonsense, good humour and sheer decency. The comments made today bare testimony to that. We have all learnt much from his demeanour and contribution.

John brought to his farming career enormous energy, great intelligence and dedication to excellence, which is shown in the quality of livestock that he and his family bred. As Hon Murray Criddle said, the influence of his work has spread to many farms throughout the State. His contribution as a parliamentarian - I do not think he was ever a politician, but always a parliamentarian - was notable for those qualities I mentioned earlier and reflected in comments by other members; that is, mainly commonsense, down-to-earth goodness and charity to all other members of the House.

As a farmer, I want to record his enormous contribution to those livestock and farming industries throughout the great southern. As has been said, he was also a keen sportsman and musician. His gunshots and his musical notes have been heard throughout the bottom end of the State and have been really appreciated. He was a great party man who joined in not only the spirit of the occasion but also the dances at which he and his band played. He was always a thoroughly good bloke and was appreciated for that throughout the area.

As well as being a parliamentarian, he made a great contribution to the agricultural industries. He shared his knowledge throughout the farming region and was deeply involved in the community.

I too express my deep sympathy to Francine and his extended family. I know they will look back on his life with great appreciation, although, naturally, with a little bit of sadness. However, in all I think they will be like the rest of us and be thankful to have known John and will appreciate his work for the State.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): Before I put the question I join with all those members who have indicated their support for the motion. I too was a member of this place during the time John was here, certainly from 1989 to 1993. When I heard of John's untimely death last week I wondered how I would describe him as a man. I thought that, firstly, there was no question that he was a genuine person. We have heard of people described as genuine country people. He was a genuine country person, someone whom we could unquestionably trust.

He was well known and well respected for his advocacy of and support for country Western Australia. Above all, he was a friendly and affable person, someone to whom we could take a serious issue and get a serious answer and someone with whom we could enjoy to its limit a joke in the corridor.

John was the Police spokesman in the Legislative Council between 1989 and 1993 for the National Party. I was the Police spokesman for the Liberal Party at the time and as a result he and I regularly spoke on current Police issues. Although I might have taken a hot-headed approach to some of the issues, I could always rely on John's wisdom and commonsense to bring me back to earth and to jointly approach the various issues in what I hope was a proper manner.

The one recollection that comes to my mind when thinking of John was in the late 1980s, prior to the 1989 election, when the Liberal and National Parties held a social function in South Perth. It was to try to get greater bonding, so to speak, between both political parties to break down barriers if there were any to be broken down. There was plenty of food and drink, but after a period all members wanted to drift off and make their way home. At that time John got out his musical instrument and turned around the whole party. He really did unite all the members who were at that show and certainly broke down the barriers, as was required.

We have all been saddened by John's untimely death, but there is no question that those who knew him are in fact the better for their association with him. To Francine, to John's mother, his children and his family I express my deep sympathy on his untimely death. I will ensure that a copy of the comments made today in the *Hansard* are presented to Mrs Caldwell. I now invite members to stand for one minute in support of this motion.

Question passed, members standing.