

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 14 March 2000

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S PROCEEDINGS, AVAILABILITY TO MEDIA

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): I remind members that a live television and audio feed of the Legislative Assembly's proceedings, from prayers to the adjournment on each sitting day, is now available to the media.

In another major development, as a trial, the proceedings of the House are now available live on the Internet, and can be accessed through this Parliament's homepage at www.parliament.wa.gov.au. Members' electorate offices, as well as the many government offices which use the same Internet service provider, will be able to access the proceedings through that service provider. In addition, a limited number of feeds are available to members of the public. Current system limitations mean that the picture is nowhere near television quality; however, together with the audio it will certainly convey some of the life and feel of the House.

The initial trial period of two months will allow a further assessment of the technical capacities of the system and will start to give an indication of the level of interest. As the facility becomes more widely known, in schools, businesses and the general community, the numbers of hits on the site are likely to increase. Statistics on usage will be monitored and used in a review after the initial trial period.

MR JOHN EDWARD SKIDMORE

Condolence Motion

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [2.04 pm]: I move -

That this House record its sincere regret at the death of John Edward Skidmore and tender its deep sympathy to his family.

Jack Skidmore was born on 18 November 1919 in Kellerberrin, the son of George Bagnall Skidmore, hairdresser and tobacconist, and Kate Clark. He was educated at Kellerberrin and Southern Cross state schools and was an apprentice electrician from 1935 to 1939. On finishing his apprenticeship, he worked as an electrician at the Evanston goldmine before enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force in June 1941, serving as a trooper in the 5th Australian Vehicle Park Workshop in Australia before being discharged in November 1945.

Jack Skidmore married Vera Haustead on 6 April 1945 in Mt Hawthorn, and continued to work as an electrician in Wagin and Albany for 15 years before commencing a career as a trade union organiser and secretary from 1960 to 1982.

Prior to becoming a member of Parliament, he represented local communities as a member of the Wagin Municipal Council from 1949 to 1951 and a member of the Albany Road Board in 1952 and 1953. Jack Skidmore was elected to Parliament and entered this House as the member for Swan on 30 March 1974, serving the people of his electorate until his resignation in January 1982. He served the Parliament as the shadow Minister for Conservation and the Environment, Fisheries and Wildlife from 1978 to 1980, a member of the Joint Printing Committee from 1977 to 1981 and a member of the Public Accounts Committee in 1977 and 1978. He was also a member of the select committee inquiring into offices of profit of MPs and members' contracts with the Crown in 1981 and 1982.

On his retirement from Parliament, Jack Skidmore became active in supporting the rights of touring and recreational caravanners, and was a secretary of the WA Association of Caravan Clubs. He was also a Karrakatta Cemetery Board trustee, secretary of the Southern Cross and Wagin cycle clubs and a member of the Bassendean Bowling Club. Jack Skidmore was made an honorary life member of the Electrical Trades Union and, last year, was made a life member of the Australian Labor Party.

On behalf of all members of this House, I extend our deepest sympathy to Jack Skidmore's wife Vera and his five children and their families.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.07 pm]: On behalf of the State Opposition I join in recording Parliament's sincere regret on the death of Jack Skidmore, who passed away on the eve of the new century, 31 December 1999.

Jack Skidmore was the Labor member and briefly the Independent Labor member for the electorate of Swan for a period of eight years, from 1974 until his resignation in January 1982.

During his parliamentary career Jack was a member of various parliamentary committees including the Joint Printing Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and the select committee inquiring into offices of profit of MPs and members' contracts with the Crown. He also served as the shadow Minister for Conservation and the Environment, Fisheries and Wildlife.

Jack Skidmore had a long history with the Australian Labor Party and the trade union movement. In November 1945, after

more than four years serving in the AIF, Jack returned to his prewar occupation of electrician working in Perth, Wagin and Albany until 1960. From 1960 he worked as a union organiser and secretary for a variety of trade unions including the Electrical Trades Union, of which he later became a life honorary member. Jack also represented the Trades and Labor Council on the Industrial Foundation for Accident Prevention and the Clean Air Council.

It is interesting that in his maiden speech, Jack Skidmore highlighted a litany of problems that he saw existing in his electorate. One that he particularly focused on was State Housing Commission tenancies, and the lack of proper ongoing maintenance in that area. He made the point that in the short time he had been a member of Parliament, much of his time had been taken up with dealing with people who did not have the basic requirements to live in dignity and with a reasonable degree of comfort. His constituency was very important to him and the work that he did.

He had a long involvement with the Australian Labor Party including being an officer and delegate to the party's state executive, and to the metropolitan council, and he served as senior vice president of the state branch of the ALP. He was also a very active supporter of the WA Association of Caravan Clubs. I recall him lobbying me as the member for Victoria Park on issues related to that. Jack resigned from the state Parliamentary Labor Party in 1981 as a result of the change of leadership. He was an intensely loyal person and disapproved of the replacement of Ron Davies. Incidentally, he had been an unsuccessful candidate for the preselection for the seat of Victoria Park, which Ron Davies ultimately won. I can report to the Parliament that such wounds, which occur from time to time, can be healed. Jack Skidmore rejoined the Labor Party and played a role in it over many years. Not only did he rejoin the party but, as the Premier said, last year he was made a life member.

On behalf of the Opposition, I express our deepest sympathy to Jack Skidmore's family and thank him for his contribution to public life in Western Australia.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [2.10 pm]: On behalf of the National Party, I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this condolence motion. I am sure most of the members in this House who experienced the Assembly Chamber when Jack Skidmore was a member have some vivid memories of him. His great reputation was that any time the Australian Labor Party was short of a speaker, Jack Skidmore could be relied on to give a speech on any subject but the matter before the Chair for the full period of time allocated to him! Nevertheless, the comments made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition are right: Jack Skidmore spent most of his time as a representative trying to look after the people in his constituency, particularly those he felt were the battlers. There is no question that he made a significant contribution to this Parliament.

MRS ROBERTS (Midland) [2.11 pm]: I rise to speak on this condolence motion because, as the Premier and other speakers mentioned, Jack Skidmore was the member for Swan, which covers the Midland region. Many people in my electorate affectionately remember Jack Skidmore as their representative. The previous speakers have already outlined and detailed the many positions Jack held within the Parliament, the union movement, the Labor Party and local government. He also had many interests, including various cycling clubs and the Bassendean Bowling Club, and an interest in the touring and recreational caravanning industry. Jack Skidmore led quite a remarkable life and he certainly contributed much to the people in the Swan and Midland areas. I pay tribute to the work he did in that regard and give my condolences to his wife Vera, his three sons, his two daughters and their respective families.

Question passed, members standing.

HON HUGH NORMAN GUTHRIE

Condolence Motion

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [2.13 pm]: I move -

That this House record its sincere regret at the death of Hon Hugh Norman Guthrie and tender its deep sympathy to his family.

Hugh Guthrie was born in Laverton on 2 July 1910, the son of Wemyss Manley Guthrie and Annie Hutchinson. He was educated at Miss Hillferty's Private Junior School in West Perth and then attended Hale School from 1920 to 1927, remaining a loyal Old Haleian throughout his life.

He went on to study law at the University of Western Australia and served as an articled clerk at the law firm of Lohrmann and Tindal - now part of Minter Ellison - before being admitted to practice in July 1933 and becoming a partner in the firm four years later.

On 15 May 1940, Hugh Guthrie enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Force, being an original member of the 2nd/16th Battalion and then the 39th Battalion. He served in the Middle East, Papua New Guinea, Dutch New Guinea, Morotai and Borneo. He was wounded in Sanananda and was also mentioned in despatches. He also served in the headquarters of Sir Leslie Morshead when Sir Leslie was commander of the 2nd Australian Corps, before being discharged on 30 October 1945. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1942, was promoted to lieutenant a year later and subsequently promoted to captain on 14 December 1943. On his return from war, Mr Guthrie married June Collins at Perth College chapel in April 1946.

Politics was a lifetime interest for Hugh Guthrie. He joined the National Party in 1933 and the Liberal Party in 1945, being a member successively of the Peppermint Grove, Claremont and Subiaco branches. Mr Guthrie entered this House in 1959 when he was elected as the member for Subiaco and held the seat until his retirement from Parliament in 1971.