



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Tuesday, 9 February 2010

LYON, MR WD

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.14 pm): I rise to offer my sympathies and sincere condolences to the family and friends of William David Lyon, known as Bill, who passed away on Thursday, 14 January 2010, aged 83 years. Bill Lyon was born in Ingham in 1926, the eldest of five children. The Lyon family lived just outside Ingham on a cane farm near the township of Macknade.

Bill attended Macknade State School, but his formal education finished after he completed year 7 due to the war, whereupon he commenced work in the sugar mill. Bill tried to join the army but, as the sugar industry was declared an essential industry, he was declined entry to the defence forces. Bill loved sport and played rugby league for the Herbert River district and has been a strong supporter of the North Queensland Cowboys. Bill was an amateur boxer and, for a short time, coached the boys at St Teresa's College Abergowrie. Bill was a long-time member of the Halifax Rifle Club and the Macknade Bowls Club. In 1951, Bill married his wife, Ann, who was a teacher at Macknade State School.

When the Abergowrie area, in the upper Herbert River valley, north-west of Ingham, was opened up to expand the sugar industry, Bill secured an assignment and he and Ann moved there and began farming. Bill worked hard to clear the land and was well known for keeping his farm and equipment well maintained. Bill and Ann were pioneers of the Abergowrie area and raised four children on their farm—Elizabeth, Robert, Christine and Stephen. Bill purchased one of the first cane loaders in the Abergowrie area and purchased his first mechanical sugarcane harvester in 1965.

Bill, along with his son Robert, went on to build up a successful contract sugarcane harvesting business in the Herbert River district, which was sold only a year ago. Indeed, Bill had continued to be active on the farm until last year, such was his passion for farming and all things that grow.

Bill Lyon had joined the then Country Party in 1961 and had been a long-serving and loyal member of the National Party for many years. Bill and his wife, Ann, have supported the party and its candidates—including myself in recent years—through many successful periods and through many difficult periods. I have always been grateful for their quiet but committed support and appreciated the way they have taken an interest in the issues of concern to the local community.

Bill Lyon was a well-respected man in the Herbert River district. He was a very proud family man. His family was his primary concern and much of what he did during his life was focused on providing for his wife and his children. Bill was an affable man who was enthusiastic about life. He turned his hand to the game of golf for the first time in his 60s and he saw his first snowfall on a trip to Canada in his 70s.

Bill passed away in the Townsville Hospital after a brief illness. Importantly, he was surrounded by members of his family. His life was celebrated and remembered at a service in the Uniting Church at Ingham on Wednesday, 20 January 2010. To Ann and the Lyon family, my thoughts and prayers and those of your friends are with you during this difficult time. Bill will be sadly missed by all, but he left behind a wonderful legacy and many happy memories.