

<url>[https://www.historichansard.net/hofreps/1901/19010808\\_reps\\_1\\_3](https://www.historichansard.net/hofreps/1901/19010808_reps_1_3)</url>  
1901-08-08

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

MEMBER DECEASED

Mr SPEAKER

- It is with very deep regret that I have to announce to the House the death of the Hon. William Henry Groom, member for the Darling . Downs division of the State of Queensland.

<page>3547</page>

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - The announcement you have made to the House, Mr. Speaker, will, I am sure, be received with profound grief by every honorable member. Not only is it in itself a thing more than ordinarily painful that, so soon after this Parliament should have begun its work, one of its most respected members should be stricken to death.; but in the present instance there are circumstances which take the event out of the common lot of those miseries with which we all sympathize and which we all deplore. The late member for Darling Downs was a very old parliamentarian. He was, I think, the oldest or nearly the oldest parliamentarian in Queensland, and certainly the oldest parliamentarian here. In that sense he was the father of the House, and his name will be recorded as the mover of the "first Address in Reply ever moved in this Chamber. By great application and unwearied industry he made himself a master of parliamentary law and usage, and he was instructed by the fulness of his experience in not only the methods of Parliament, but also in the higher aspects of public policy. During his membership of this House, he earned the unfeigned respect of honorable members in all parts of the Chamber. I am loth to establish a precedent for a motion for adjournment on occasions like this, because, while I know that honorable members are, as a rule, quite ready to pay that mark of respect to deceased colleagues, I am equally convinced that old servants of the public, if they could be consulted in the matter, would wish that their departure should not be marked by any disturbance of public business. Therefore, it is with rather divided feelings that I shall presently propose the adjournment of the House. But, before we adjourn, I think that it is necessary to convey to the public, and to the widow and family of: the late member, an expression of our sense of the loss which the Commonwealth has sustained by his death, and our feeling of sympathy with those who are near and dear to him. I therefore move -

That this House desires to record its profound regret at the loss which the Commonwealth suffers in the death of the senior member of the

House, the honorable W. H. Groom, and expresses its sincere condolence with his widow and the members of his family in their bereavement.

That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey the foregoing resolution to Mrs. Groom.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- On behalf of honorable members on this side of the House, I join with the Prime Minister in expressing my profound sorrow at the death of one of its most estimable members, and I desire to add to what he has said my expression, on behalf of the Opposition, of our deep sympathy with the widow and family who have sustained such an irreparable loss. As I represent a different State from that represented by the late honorable member, I have not had an opportunity of knowing very much of his public career, but I met him on several occasions since this Parliament assembled in Melbourne, and I can say from my observation of him that we have lost one of the most experienced and matured minds in the House, to say nothing of his other qualities. One could not be in contact with the honorable member for five minutes without being conscious of the kindness of his disposition and the urbanity and friendliness of manner which marked his intercourse with all with whom he was brought into association. I deplore the loss of this House, and of the great State of Queensland, which has lost such an able representative, at a time when some of the most serious questions affecting the industrial life of that country are about to receive the attention of . this Parliament. His ripe and matured judgment would have been of inestimable service in guiding us to safe conclusions.

<page>3548</page>

Mr FISHER

- I feel that we are not far enough away from the event which made us members of the Commonwealth Parliament to forget our associations with the State Legislatures, and as one who has been a member of the Legislature of Queensland, I indorse all that has been said regarding our deceased colleague. The late member for Darling Downs was a notable person before I entered the public life of Queensland, and although that was so, no one could be more unassuming, nor more willing and capable to give advice to young members of the Assembly. He occupied the high position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland with honour to himself and credit to the Parliament for a period of five years, and he had a unique public career, and has left a record, which, I think, is not to be surpassed in the public life of any country. For 39 years he was successful in every electoral contest which he entered, and he left the constituency of Toowoomba only to represent the district of Darling Downs in this House. ' I know that it was a wrench to him to leave the State Assembly to come here, but he felt that it was a duty he owed to those for whom he had worked, and to the district which, with a statesman's foresight, he had long before seen was likely to be a very important part of the great State of Queensland. He fought for the Darling Downs district under ridicule and opposition which to-day is incomprehensible, but its development has verified his words and ideas, and no statesman could desire more than to see that his life work was not in vain. I feel, as the honorable member for Wentworth has said, that Queensland has lost a representative which she can ill afford to lose at the present time, but the fact that the late member for Darling Downs was so devoted to his public duties, that when well up in years he was willing to leave his home to serve his country, is a higher eulogy of his character than any we can pass upon it. I have nothing more to say, except to add, on behalf of myself and the party to which I belong, our expression of sorrow for those who have been bereaved, and a trust that his widow will receive that blessing from the Giver of all good things which will enable her to bear her sorrow with fortitude and patience.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Order of Business

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - Consequent on the motion which has just been passed, I have to make a proposal, for the furtherance of public business, to the House, which I am quite confident will be assented to by honorable members. This is the second time in a week that this House has adjourned because of a grave reason, and I am going to ask honorable members to assent, with concurrence, to , a motion that this House at its rising adjourn till to-morrow, at half-past ten o'clock, in order that the time that has been lost, no doubt for urgent reasons, may nevertheless be somewhat retrieved. I shall ask for the whole of to-morrow, and if honorable members who are in charge of business other than public business will assent to that, and I think they will, the public business will proceed beyond the usual time of meeting and until the ordinary hour of adjournment. I am quite sure that there is enough good feeling - that, in fact, there is abundant good feeling - on the part of the honorable member who has charge of the principal private business for to-morrow, to induce him to fall in with this proposal. I therefore move - That the House at its rising adjourn till tomorrow at half past ten o'clock, Government business then to take precedence of all other business.

Mr Conroy

-Is it intended that Government business should occupy the whole day?

Mr BARTON

- Yes. Although the honorable member who has charge of the principal business for to-morrow is not here, I am sure that he will fall in with the proposal.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I think that the proposal of the Prime Minister is quite reasonable under the circumstances, and considering that only two hours of tomorrow's sitting would be devoted to private business in the ordinary way, it would be vastly better to give the whole of the time to public business. I quite agree with the motion.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Funeral of the late Mr. W. H. Groom.

Mr BARTON

- I move-

That the House do now adjourn.

I may inform honorable members that the body of our deceased fellow member will be conveyed to the railway station, to be taken thence to Queensland by the express, at a quarter past five this afternoon. I am now sending for the information necessary to . enable honorable members to pay their last tribute of respect to the remains of Mr, Groom, and if honorable members will do me the favour to inquire about three o'clock, I expect then to be able to give them fuller particulars.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

<page>3549</page>

14:45:00

House adjourned at 2.45 p.m.