



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

**Wakefield Electorate: Automotive Industry,
Wakefield Electorate: Australian Defence Force**

SPEECH

Thursday, 12 December 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Champion, Nick, MP

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Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (11:31): Obviously, the events of the last 24 hours with regard to Holden have been pretty traumatic to my electorate, and I was full of fury and anger yesterday. You wake up the next day and you are gutted by the consequences of these decisions. I am not seeking to have an argument with government members in this chamber; I have said all I think I need to say. But this morning I received an email from Martin—I will not say his last name—who works for Holden. The email reads:

Nick, from myself and my family, I would like to thank you and the Labor team for your hard work to help trying to keep the automotive industry going. It's been a very hard road recently and there'll be rocky roads ahead. I'd appreciate it if you could forward my thanks to Mr Weatherill also, please, as I share his frustration but all along noticed his immense efforts.

When you are feeling gutted and when you are looking down the barrel, having to look people in the eye who have lost their jobs, emails like that do make a difference, a great difference, to the morale of all concerned. Certainly, it makes a big difference to me. I just wanted to mention that and record in *Hansard* for Martin and all those other workers down there that my thoughts are with them and I will be there for those rocky roads ahead once the media parade has passed us by. And that is all I will say about that matter.

There are some other electorate matters I want to mention that are very dear to my heart. The other day, I attended the battalion officers and partners dinner for 7RAR in my electorate. This was dear to my heart because I had seen these soldiers train for Afghanistan and I had spoken at their farewell parade, representing the then Prime Minister, Prime Minister Gillard, and Stephen Smith, the then defence minister. I formed a very strong affection for 7RAR and was lucky enough to visit them in Afghanistan while they were on operations. I consider that I have made some good friends in the regiment. So I was very pleased to attend the dinner the other night with Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm Wells; Major Beck; Major Levon Lambert, who has been promoted recently, I am pleased to say; Captain Oowan Davies; Captain Scott Minion; RSM Warrant Officer Michael Landy; and many, many others who have served this nation, the state of South Australia and the regiment with such distinction. They were very welcoming, and I look forward to attending many more dinners with them.

They were kind enough, in the past, to have given me an Australian flag which had flown over the headquarters in Tarin Kot. It is a flag that sits in my office, and it reminds me of their service and the service of all of our armed forces personnel and the great risks they take.

I was also lucky enough to attend, the other day, the handover of command parade and unit open day of the A Squadron of the 3rd/9th Light Horse, South Australian Mounted Rifles, which is a reserve regiment but one with a very distinctive history, from the Boer War through to Palestine, Gallipoli and the Western Front. It was a great parade, and I congratulate Lieutenant Colonel Jake Kearsley and Major Michael Harris, who has just recently taken over the regiment.

Finally, I would like to mention Reg Swanborough, who was recently awarded the Arctic Star Medal for his service to the Royal Navy. That is an important acknowledgement of the great risks that are taken by those who work in logistics. We all know that those Arctic convoys kept the Allied effort going during the dark days of World War II, and we know the great risks they took in that. So it is great to see Reg, who is a mate of mine, appropriately acknowledged. As I said, though it has been a very sad day for my electorate in the last 24 hours — (*Time expired*)