



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Member for Batman

SPEECH

Wednesday, 29 May 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Abbott, Tony, MP

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Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:14): I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in response to the member for Batman. This House has just heard a heartfelt statement from deep in the Labor tradition. It is a sad day for the parliament, a sad day for the Labor Party and a sad day for the country that someone of the member for Batman's stature is choosing to serve our country in a different capacity.

The member for Batman, if I may say so, is not simply another member of this parliament; he is steeped in this parliament, he is steeped in the traditions of service, he is steeped in the traditions of parliaments around this country. If I may use the phrase, the member for Batman is Labor Party royalty. I have in times past somewhat slightly referred to the 'hereditary peers' of this parliament. I regret on this occasion that I did so then. I should not have made light of the tradition which the member for Batman represents—the tradition of service to party and country which the member for Batman and his family have represented for several generations.

The member for Batman spoke with considerable emotion. He respects the party he served. I should say from this side of the parliament that we too respect the party he has served. Over the years, the Labor Party has made a monumental contribution to this country. The Labor Party, at its best, has been a nation-building party, and the member for Batman has always harkened to the best traditions of the Australian Labor Party.

I regret that he feels unable to stay in the parliament. I regret that he felt unable to remain in the current government. The government, his party, the parliament and our country will be the poorer for his absence. Well may we shed a tear for things which were, which should be but which are not. From this side of the political trench I salute an honourable opponent and a great Australian.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!