

JOHNSON, MR STEPHEN EDWARD INGRAM

Condolence Motion

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [2.01 pm]: I move -

That this House records its sincere regret at the death of Stephen Edward Ingram Johnson and tenders its deep sympathy to his family.

S.E.I. or Ted, Johnson was born on 17 February 1909 at Chapel-en-le-Firth, Bamford, Derbyshire, in England. He was the son of Stephen Henry Johnson, a schoolteacher, farmer and Secretary of the Farmers and Settlers Association, and Barbara Foster-Barham. Ted Johnson arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia with his family in April 1912, and was educated at Scotsdale, James Street, Subiaco and Rosalie state schools and High School, later known as Hale School, until 1923. After Ted left school, he undertook various temporary jobs in a chemist shop, print office and a farm before becoming a bank officer with the Bank of Australasia from October 1924 to 1952. He worked in Gnowangerup, Kulin and the metropolitan area.

Ted enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 14 January 1941 and served with the 44th Battalion and 35th Australian Infantry Training Battalion in Western Australia and New South Wales. He was promoted to lieutenant on 28 October 1941. He was discharged from the Army on 10 July 1946.

Ted Johnson married Winifred Mabel McNaughton on 4 December 1937 at St Mary's Church, South Perth. She died on 3 April 1975. He then married Edna Pockrass on 14 February 1976.

Ted Johnson joined the Australian Labor Party in 1944 and was the secretary of his local branch, a delegate to the metropolitan council and a member of the state executive. He was elected to the Parliament as the member for Leederville at a by-election on 9 February 1952, and he served that electorate in this House until his defeat at the general election on 21 March 1959. He then unsuccessfully contested the House of Representatives seat of Swan at the 1961 federal election. Ted Johnson served the Parliament as the Secretary of the Parliamentary Labor Party from 1953 to 1959. He was a member of the Parliament's Library Committee from 1953 to 1959, and in 1956 was chairman of the select committee inquiring into a five-day working week for banks in Western Australia. Ted Johnson was also an executive member of the Australian Bank Employees Union, the Western Australian President of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women, and the Treasurer of the Kindergarten Union of Western Australia.

In his later years, Ted returned to the classroom as a student to complete his matriculation in 1975, and enrolled as a student at the University of Western Australia. Ted was made a life member of the Australian Labor Party for his continuing contribution to the Labor movement. Many members of this House would be aware of Ted's views, as he was a regular correspondent to *The West Australian* and other publications. Ted used to write to me about a range of matters, particularly about the need to properly regulate our financial institutions. He was very distressed at the amount of deregulation that had occurred in that area. I will miss receiving the wonderfully typed letters, which were very well argued, by S.E.I., Ted, Johnson. He was a credit to himself given the commitments he undertook. By going back to university in later life and using that knowledge to continue his social contribution was a wonderful testimony to a very fine man.

On behalf of all members of this House I extend our deepest sympathy to Ted Johnson's wife Edna and his family.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [2.05 pm]: Members of the opposition Liberal Party join in the expression of condolences to Ted Johnson's family. Ted Johnson, who has passed away at the age of 92, had the distinction of holding the crucial marginal seat of Leederville for the Australian Labor Party during the term of the Hawke Government in 1953-59. Had his parliamentary career not been cut short by electoral defeat, he may well have played a larger role in public life. Only a year after his election as the member for Leederville in a by-election in 1952, he was chosen as Secretary of the Parliamentary Labor Party and held that position for six years.

Ted Johnson was clearly a man of strong convictions. As a career bank officer in the era of the post-war controversy of bank nationalisation, it would not always have been easy for him to be an active member of the Australian Labor Party. Later in 1956 he was to chair a select committee inquiring into a five-day working week for banks in Western Australia. When he contested Leederville after the death of its long-serving member, Alex Panton, it was no longer a safe seat. Ted Johnson retained Leederville for the ALP with a majority of 665. The following year at the 1953 general election, won by the ALP with a majority of two, he retained his seat with an increased margin of 874 votes.

A redistribution of boundaries threatened his career again by transferring the suburb of Wembley into Leederville with the consequent decision of the Liberal Party member for the adjoining seat of Wembley Beaches to contest Leederville. Ted Johnson succeeded in holding his seat with a majority of just 136. Once again his success in a marginal seat was crucial in returning the Labor Party to Government. However, in 1959 the late Dr Guy Henn defeated Ted in an adverse political climate. Although he contested the federal seat of Swan in 1961, he was unsuccessful and he did not return to a Parliament. However, as the Premier also said, Ted Johnson did not lose his commitment to politics. He was a writer of letters to the editor of the newspaper and in his 80s he still attended public seminars on constitutional matters. His biography shows that although his formal schooling ended at the age of 15, he returned to study and matriculated at the age of 66 and enrolled at a university.

Ted Johnson worked in the banking industry for 28 years, apart from wartime service in the Australian Imperial Force. He maintained a truly life-long interest in public affairs far beyond his seven years in the Legislative Assembly. Again, my colleagues and I express our condolences to his family.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [2.08 pm]: I did not know Ted Johnson, which is not surprising because he was here in the 1960s, which is a long time ago. He had a distinguished career. The two party leaders before me have read out a considerable list of his achievements and the National Party expresses its condolences to his family.

Question passed, members standing.