



Speech by

RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 20 June 2002

MR R. PARKINSON

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (12.13 a.m.): Rod Parkinson, who died on Tuesday night at the age of 64, was a wonderful man. His passing is a sad loss most particularly to his family but also to Queensland Rail and to the Ipswich community. Rod Parkinson was an Ipswich boy. He began work as an apprentice wagon builder in the North Ipswich railway workshops at the age of 14 on 2 June 1952. He clocked up his 50 years in QR just a couple of weeks ago and was looking forward to retiring on his 65th birthday, due on 13 August. Mr Parkinson progressed through QR, finishing his apprenticeship and becoming a site manager. Over the last few years he had been employed on special projects as the head of steam and heritage. It was his job to oversee, along with Kel Creedy and others, the restoration of steam locomotives to return to duty and to form part of the workshop's museum which will soon be opened.

Mr Parkinson was an incredibly kind and decent person. He was a private man but someone you could trust and as he rose up the ranks he was a very good boss. He reminded me a lot of my grandfather Frank Nolan, which is probably about the nicest thing I could say about anyone. In talking about him in the last few days the fellows over at the workshops have decided that while he never wore a cross on his collar he was something of a padre among them—someone who could be trusted for wisdom and advice. I knew Mr Parkinson for many years because he used to umpire my school hockey games. I always felt that even as a kid he kept an eye out for me. I remember once taking a penalty stroke and Mr Parkinson was the umpire. He turned his back to the goalie and whispered in my ear about where I should aim. I missed. He gave up umpiring when they started paying people because he did not think that that was right.

When I visited Mr Parkinson after his heart attack last week I really thought that he would be fine. He talked about leaving the workshops but said he felt his job had been done. He and his wife Bev were talking about getting back into dancing in retirement. I feel terribly sorry for Bev to lose such a wonderful person and I express my sympathy to his family. The end of Mr Parkinson's journey makes me feel very sad, but I take solace that he has shown all of us how it is to be a good and decent person along the way.