

My Lord,

I will have to withdraw before the conclusion of these proceedings to attend to other pressing business, but I wished particularly to be here, on so significant a farewell occasion, to pay tribute to HL on behalf of the Law Officers, the Executive and the public.

The Bar might conclude from exterior impression that HL is a robust, direct, tough, forthright, fiercely independent and opinionated Liverpudlian - and in that conclusion the Bar would, of course, be right.

I well recall appearing before HL in a murder trial many years ago in which, having concluded the evidence of an important witness by, as I fancied, rather skilfully announcing that I would not re-examine, the learned judge leaned forward on the bench and enquired, in an apparently innocent and dry tone, whether I had heard the cross-examination?

But if the Bar were so to conclude, they would at best be only partly right because as those who are fortunate enough to become acquainted with his character and inevitable experience, HL is also enthusiastic, warm hearted, fair minded, generous of spirit, brave and truly kind.

It has been an extraordinary privilege to have worked alongside HL in the often unsung and invisible work that is daily undertaken by the President of the Queen's Bench Division to support and maintain the administration of justice, on the Criminal Justice Board and in the many other vital functions he fulfils.

The height by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night.

In that toil, HL has been an indefatigable servant of the public interest and while wishing HL a long, happy, active and fulfilling retirement, we know, by the imprint he has left upon *us* the huge gap that his absence from our counsels will leave.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that this absence will not be prolonged, that the public whom he has served with such distinction will find *other* purposes for him to pursue, and that given that record, he is not one of those of whom, when the call comes, it has ever been or *could* ever be said, that he was "weighed in the balance and found wanting".