

Register 18th December 1902

UNIVERSITY DINNER.

A SUCCESSFUL GATHERING.

On Wednesday evening the annual dinner of the members of the University was held at the South Australian Hotel. There was a large attendance of the leading members of the learned professions. The Chancellor of the University (His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Samuel Way, Bart.), presided. He was supported on the right by the Premier (Hon. J. G. Jenkins), the President of the Legislative Council (Hon. Sir Lancelot Stirling), the Treasurer (Hon. R. Butler), the Deputy Postmaster-General (Sir Charles Todd), and Sir John Downer; and on the left by the Minister for Defence (Rp. Sir John Forrest), the Vice-Chancellor (Dr. Barlow), the Attorney-General (Hon. J. H. Gordon), Rp. Sir Langdon Bonython, and the Sheriff (Mr. W. R. Boothby, C.M.G.). Apologies were received from His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir James Penn Boucaut, Mr. Justice Bunday, and Sr. Sir Josiah Symon, and the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. Cohen, M.P.). After an excellent repast, provided by the manager of the hotel (Mr. Messenger), the Chairman gave the loyal toasts of "The King," "The Queen, Prince, and Princess of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family." In proposing the health of "The Governor-General," the Chairman said the King could have appointed no man in the empire to the position of Governor-General who could fill it more efficiently, or whose appointment could have given greater joy to the people of South Australia than Lord Tennyson. (Applause.)

The Minister of Education (Hon. J. H. Gordon) in proposing the toast of "The Adelaide University," said that the splendid group of educational buildings which adorned North terrace was well calculated to inspire South Australians with gratitude for the past, and with hope for the future. They were at once such monuments of private munificence and such guarantees of future national progress as were possessed by no country in the world so numerically small as South Australia. (Hear, hear.) How wise were these men—Sir W. W. Hughes, Sir Thomas Elder, Mr. J. H. Angas, Mr. G. Brookman, and the others who had in greater or lesser degree assisted in the establishment of these institutions for the education of the people. How cleverly they had evaded the law against accumulations. (Laughter.) The late Mr. Thelluson, a man of far-reaching ambition, made a testamentary disposition of his great estate, designed to perpetuate his name for ages, and to secure the gratitude of distant heirs. But the scheme was frustrated by the Courts as calculated to disturb the equities of the state, and all such schemes are now declared illegal by Act of Parliament. But the gentleman he had named had outwitted the law. They had made dispositions which would gather increasing riches for all time; dispositions which would never lapse for want of heirs, and the accumulations of which would maintain, not disturb, the equities of the state. (Applause.) Though all these institutions were working from the same centre, the University embraced the widest circumference. It aimed at imparting that catholicity of thought and culture which checked provincialism and extended the influence of the community far beyond its own borders. From it would go many men who would carry into the larger life of the Commonwealth the pure atmosphere of their Alma Mater. Already one of its literati had a firm hand upon the helm of state, in the person of their friend Sir John Forrest—(applause)—who had that day added to his many distinctions, not the least of them the degree of Doctor of Laws of the Adelaide University. (Cheers.) There had been and would still be great men who had had no University training. But the number of these was becoming smaller and smaller as opportunities for the higher education were extended—as they were being extended every year in South Australia at least. (Cheers.) The "Autoerat of the Breakfast Table" had wittily said, speaking of the self-educated man, that while he had admired the man who had fashioned himself with his own jack-knife, yet he preferred the regular engine-turned article. And he was right. Culture was the complement of reason. Indeed, it was a remarkable thing that the principal benefactors to Universities, both here and in America, were men who had had no University training, but who by their splendid gifts showed how much they valued it. (Cheers.) With the mensurative mind of the true financier, they saw that the best investment they could make was in the promotion of learning. For, as Lord Bacon said, "The monuments of wit and learning are more durable than the monuments of power or of the hands." If he was right in thinking that the future of Australia must largely fall into the hands of men trained in Australian Universities, then the responsibilities of the governors and professors of these institutions rose to the level of national obligation. They were in control of an elemental force, a force which must shape great destinies. (Cheers.) South Australia was justified in the belief that those who controlled the University of Adelaide, from its distinguished Chancellor down to the most junior lecturer, were imbued with a profound sense of their responsibilities. They knew that men do not live by scholarships alone, and they endeavoured so to uplift the education of their students that culture and noble aims went hand in hand. (Applause.)

The Chairman, in acknowledging the sentiment, said the Minister of Education looked forward when he contemplated the scene that afternoon. He himself looked back 25 years, and he remembered the previous Chancellors. He remembered the professors imported before a beneficent federal law prevented them from bringing hatters into the Commonwealth or engaging learned professors on the other side of the world. (Loud laughter.) His predecessors in office asked where were the students, but he felt that afternoon that undoubtedly they were not creatures of imagination

(laughter)—but were apparent indeed. (Laughter.) He wanted to give the stern logic of fact to show that the Minister of Education in his forecast of the future was correct. Sir Richard Hansen thought they would not have students, but at present there were 799. (Hear, hear.) That did not represent everything. There was some fear of running the examination craze too much, but during the last few weeks 3,000 students had set for the examinations. Whether they examined too much or not the work they did largely influenced culture in the community. When they had the donations of Sir Thomas Elder the University sought to benefit the whole state, and two professors suggested that they should educate the teachers of the elementary schools. Thirty-six of those were now attending classes in the University, and he was informed by Mr. Scott that in two years, without any previous special training, they had passed three and a half out of the six compulsory subjects, and one brilliant student had passed five out of the six. (Applause.) South Australia had led the van in the matter of private munificence to Universities, and now it was followed in England and America. In 1901 the citizens of America gave 52 million pounds to Universities. He mentioned that to encourage others. The drought was nearly over. (Hear, hear.) He trusted South Australia would be a wealthy community, and he asked the budding millionaires to follow the example of other benefactors to the University. (Applause.)

Mr. J. G. E. Murray proposed the toast of "The staff." With the exception of a few professors during the last few years he had voted for the selection of all the others. To the extent of one-twentieth part they were his creatures—(laughter)—and he was proud of them. He referred in graceful, humorous terms to the qualifications of the various professors and the little University tibbits which surrounded their appointments, and the recital of the light side of a serious institution was received with the utmost merriment. The staff was doing admirable work with whole-hearted devotion. They had the confidence of the University and the respect and esteem of the students, and the regard of all Australians who desired that the nation should be a law-abiding one. (Applause.)

Professor Henderson, in responding, said as the baby of the staff he felt amazed that he had the temerity to talk about subjects of which he knew nothing. He had some ideas on Universities, but that was the palace of concord that night, and his ideas might be out of place. One of the most gratifying first impressions he had received was from the congenial and close relations which existed in South Australia between the University and the Department for Public Instruction. In this state they had solved an important and difficult problem, and had collated the two great branches of instruction. Professors Bragg and Mitchell had made the University a national institution. In this direction South Australia had done such good work that New South Wales was following her lead. (Hear, hear.) On behalf of the staff he thanked them. (Hear, hear.)

The Vice-Chancellor (Dr. Barlow) asked the company to drink to "The guests." He traced the early history of the University, and spoke of the many struggles the council and senate had in securing all the liberties they desired. He welcomed the Premier, his colleagues, Sir John Forrest, and the President of the council

of the School of Mines (Rp. Sir Langdon Bonython.) (Hear, hear.)

The Premier (Hon. J. G. Jenkins), who met with a hearty reception, thanked the company on behalf of the guests for the way the toast had been received. He felt bashful, and for a politician to say that was something. When he reflected that every speech they had heard that night—and he had not heard better at a banquet during recent years—had been delivered by graduates of the University or gentlemen learned in the law, he felt embarrassed. Perhaps Mr. Caterer had placed him on the programme to make a comparison between the University graduate and the uncultivated individual in the hope of encouraging more people to become graduates. (Laughter.) Mr. Murray had spoken about the truthfulness of the recommendations of the professors. Some time since an application was received from a person who wanted a position in a Government department, and who said a University professor would speak for him. The professor did speak for him, and said—"Don't touch him." He only wished that all those who spoke on behalf of the Government servants were as truthful and honest. He hoped that Adelaide would become the seat of learning for all Australia, and if the Adelaide University had not reached the position of being the leading University in Australia it soon would. (Hear, hear.) By-and-by if they were to believe public reports, the University in one of the other states would pass into the hands of the lawyers and liquidators, and the scholars from that prosperous state would come to Adelaide to receive wise instruction from the professors, who were a happy family, and did not quarrel, but simply taught. He had never had an opportunity of passing through a University, but he noticed that a Sydney professor had suggested that there should be a professor in politics, and he thought, perhaps in course of time, he might take that position. (Laughter.) He appreciated the remarks made about millionaires giving money to Universities. He intended during the next few years to make a few millions, because he was interested in the Arltunga country, and he promised that the first cheque he drew for £25,000 to be given away to a public institution would go to the Adelaide University. (Applause.)

Mr. T. A. Caterer proposed "The new graduates." He heartily welcomed those who had been admitted that day. They were proud to have Sir John Forrest. That day they had seen their first doctor of surgery and doctor of music.

Rp. Sir John Forrest, who was loudly cheered, desired to express his gratitude for the honour conferred upon him by the University of South Australia and the City of Adelaide whether they looked upon it as a city of learning or a great educational state, might fairly be satisfied with her reputation. It was singular indeed that such a small community should produce so many eminent citizens. One had only to look round the political life of Australia at the present time to see how many South Australians had attained prominent positions beyond the borders of their own state. That, perhaps, had one disadvantage, and that was that there had been too many good men for the positions open to them—(laughter)—and they had been somewhat in each other's way. (Laughter.) There was no other state which had produced so many capable citizens and eminent men as South Australia had. Her people were also ambitious, and if there was anything good going they were always willing to have a share of it. (Laughter.) If there was a President or a Speaker for a Federal Parliament wanted South Australia had a man fully qualified for the position, and he won the race against all comers. If they required a really competent, intelligent Minister of Customs—(laughter)—South Australia had one fit for the place. If they wanted a cultured citizen to represent South Australia at the durbar in India South Australia won again against all comers. (Laughter.) It seemed to him that those things came of the great advantage of the educational system and the University. South Australia seemed to bestride the rest of Australia like a colossus. While there might be others to take second places the chief positions fell to South Australians. They were an enterprising people, and if there was a telegraph line to be built across the continent South Australia was willing to do it and did it. (Laughter.) If a transcontinental railway was required from one side to the other—(loud cheers)—they were not willing to wait upon the Federal Parliament—"No."—but would do it themselves. Then there was another little railway to the western state, and he was sure the people of South Australia would be ready to assist it. All that went to show that in South Australia they had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and they took advantage of it. They could depend upon it, those things had not come by chance. South Australians came from a sturdy stock, but they never would have acquired fame if it had not been for their educational system. Personally he was glad to be associated with the people of South Australia, and to receive the distinction. He had been in the state before, and he had always received kindness from the people. He came in 1870 and 1874, and then he was received with the greatest hospitality. He did not come by steamer, and scarcely on horseback, for he walked most of the way. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Muecke, on behalf of the new graduates, returned thanks to the professors, from whom they had received great kindness during their studies.

The honouring, at the call of the Chairman, of the toast of "Mr. T. A. Caterer," the first University graduate, and who arranged the dinner, brought the proceedings to a close.

During the evening Mr. Chenoweth sang "The pilgrim of love" and "The message," Mr. Eugene Alderman played as a violin solo "Saltarello," and selections were rendered by an orchestra assisted by musical instruments improvised by some of the graduates.

UNIVERSITY DINNER.

The undergraduates had their day on Wednesday. In the evening a gathering of cultured professors, skilled doctors, gentlemen learned in the law, and other representative intellectual citizens—members of the University—sat down to dinner at the South Australian Hotel. They had a bounteous board, with four hours of polished speaking served up to them for dessert. The Attorney-General, with a graceful address, led off. It was one of his characteristic efforts, and the fact that speeches later on did no suffer by comparison was a tribute to their excellence. Mr. J. G. R. Murray was cleverly humorous and delicately sarcastic in proposing the toast of the staff, and Professor Henderson, the Benjamin among the professors, quite turned the tables on him. The Premier was full of anecdotes, all apt, and a strong faith in the future of the state; while Sir John Forrest poked fun at the manner in which South Australians had secured federal political positions. He pressed forward his own railway scheme, and had a quiet dig at the land grant railway.

Reg. 18th Dec. 1902