

TRouble AT THE ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

Professor Coleman Phillipson, who has resigned the chair of law at the Adelaide University, admits that his private tuition of backward students may have been inexpedient, but denies that there was anything dishonorable in it. A paper describing him as a blackmailer was recently affixed to his door.

On Saturday morning Professor Coleman Phillipson, whose resignation from the staff of the Adelaide University takes effect during the present week, made a statement with regard to the step he had taken. He explained that there were several matters on which he was pledged to silence, but he had dealt with the affair as fully as possible in the statement he was prepared to make. He had taken special care to verify the details of the various testimonials quoted in his statement. He particularly wished it to be understood that his book published since he had been at the Adelaide University was wholly completed in London. Referring to a publication of his on "Ancient Law," the professor said it was acknowledged to be the foremost book of its kind in the world in any language. He regretted that he was unable to answer a question whether he had been asked to resign as a result of the investigation by a committee of certain charges brought against him. Although admitting there was a possibility that his private tuition of backward students could lay itself open to criticism, he pointed out that in the law examinations there was always an outside independent examiner, in addition to himself. A well-known professor in London had, while occupying a similar position to his, been at the same time head of a coaching academy. He also was an examiner at the University.

Professor Coleman Phillipson said he had understood his predecessor was admitted to the South Australian bar, and he had naturally assumed that the same right would be accorded him, otherwise he would never have come to South Australia, where, he added, he "did not need to win his spurs." His resignation from the University staff would take effect during the present week, and as far as he was personally concerned he was prepared to sail within a month, but he had an expensive house and effects to dispose of, and he could not state definitely how long that might take, so that he might be here for a few weeks or a few months.

The following is the text of the professor's letter of resignation:—

Dear Vice-Chancellor, May 15th, 1925. Owing to an attack recently made on me, which I consider unjustifiable, and the unpleasantness thereby caused, I beg to tender my resignation. I do so in accordance with our original agreement, which provided that after two years' service the engagement might be terminated by six months' notice. I wish to return to England in order to continue my researches, and to complete the materials for two books which I could not finish here because of the lack of documentary sources. I am anxious, too, to resume practice at the Bar in England the right to practise is usually granted to the holder of a legal chair. You will remember that I came here understanding that I could be admitted to the South Australian Bar; but the council's subsequent objection I have observed loyally throughout the whole period. Having regard to the fact that I have now completed five years' service, I would ask the council to be kind enough to allow me leave of absence till the end of the present year.

The reply is as follows:— The University of Adelaide, 15th May, 1925.

Dear Professor Phillipson, I have read to the council the letter which you have addressed to me, intimating your desire to resign from the Chair of Law at the end of the present year, and requesting that you be granted leave of absence until then. The council has decided to accept your resignation, and to grant you leave of absence when you have completed the work of the present term. You will be paid the salary of the professorship till the end of the year. The council will be glad to resume the valuable work which you gave up to come to Adelaide. Believe me, yours sincerely, (Sgd.) W. MITCHELL, Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Phillipson's Statement.

"The fact is," says Professor Phillipson in a statement given to a representative of "The Advertiser," "that during the last two years, especially after the council objected to my call to the S.A. Bar, I have been desirous of returning home, and but for the dissuasion of my wife, who loves the climate here, I would have already returned to London—that glorious and incomparable centre of life, scholarship, culture, and international affairs. It is only there that I can continue my researches, of which Lord Birkenhead, when Lord Chancellor, wrote to me from the House of Lords in this letter, which I am glad to show you. He says:—It may be that you will have sufficient leisure to compile that complete history of international law which no one living is more

competent to produce.' I may add that Lord Reading, the present Viceroy of India, concluded in the following words a letter which he sent me after his mission to the United States:—'It may interest you to know that you have a good number of admirers in the United States.' Lord Reading was thinking of the influence my publications had in America. Well, it is this work I want to continue; and I cannot possibly do so here. I published one book during my stay here, but I had written it entirely in London.

"Besides, I am keenly interested in international affairs; and at the Paris Peace Conference I was counsel in international law for the British Delegation. It may interest you to see a communication from the present Lord Chief Justice, who refers to certain experiences we had together in Paris:—'You paid a number of visits with me to the other lawyers who were sitting upon the commission to consider the responsibility of those accused of the violations of the laws of war, and I was much interested to find that you had already, by your books, achieved among them a standing which was not only important but gratifying.'

"And there is a letter from Lord Hardinge of Penshurst:—'Dear Mr. Phillipson—On behalf of Mr. Balfour and myself, I wish to thank you most sincerely for the valuable assistance you have been good enough to give the historical section in the compilation of the series of handbooks for the Peace Conference. Those books, which are the product of much learning, literary skill, and hard work ungrudgingly given, have not only earned glowing testimony throughout all ranks of the British delegation, to which they have been a very great benefit, but will undoubtedly prove of lasting utility and interest. With many thanks for your share in their success, believe me, yours sincerely (Signed), Hardinge of Penshurst.'

"Here is a long memorandum, signed by some of the leading delegates at the Peace Conference. They speak of a certain piece of work I did there as 'wonderful.' But it may interest you, in view of the recent death of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, to see this letter from him to me. He says:—'I am quite certain that, had it not been for your knowledge of international law and the advice which you were able to give me on very many occasions, the report of Sub-Commission I, of which I had the honor of being chairman, would not have been in such a satisfactory form as that in which we were able to present it to the Plenary Commission.' This kind of work interests me deeply. Besides, I shall resume practice at the Bar; and you may perhaps remember that some time ago I was offered by the South Australian Committee of Producers a case for the Privy Council. I could not have taken it, because of the Council's objection to my admission to the bar here. I would not have dreamt of coming here if I had not understood that my admission would be allowed. Having completed my five years' service as agreed, I am glad to return home, where I shall find a wide field for my interests, legal, political, and literary. I am afraid I shall no longer be able to inflict lectures on the long-suffering public. They have always listened with patience and enthusiasm to my addresses, and I thank them heartily. It was always a stimulus and an inspiration to me to see fine audiences keenly interested in intellectual questions and international matters."

"Nothing Dishonorable or Wrongful."

Regarding the reference to an attack and the unpleasantness mentioned in his letter, Professor Phillipson said:—"Well, the crux of the whole affair is my willingness to give private tuition to one or two backward students. The council objected to it. There is nothing dishonorable or wrongful in it, though it may be inexpedient, as there is always somebody or other ready to place the worst possible construction upon it, and somebody did. It is possible, of course, that the practice may be abused, but why necessarily regard a possibility as an accomplished fact? Anyhow, I am sick and tired of the whole thing. I wish no one ill, not even him who is maliciously disposed to say and think the worst. Therefore, let the person stick another paper on my door worse even than the last one, which was this:—'Coleman Phillipson, blackmailer. Get out, you dirty swine.' Also, let the person who said he 'wondered I did not snatch his wife's bag' say something worse."

The paper complained of was affixed to Professor Phillipson's door at the University about six weeks ago.

"GLAD TO RETURN HOME."

"MALICIOUS ATTACKS" RESENTED.

In a remarkable statement, which contained a quotation from an anonymous note which he recently found pinned to his study door, Professor Coleman Phillipson (Dean of the Faculty of Law at the Adelaide University) explained on Saturday the reasons for his resignation from that position.

Questioned regarding his resignation, and his intentions for the future, Professor Phillipson gave a copy of his letter of resignation, and the reply of the University council thereto. The resignation was addressed to the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mitchell), and was worded:—

May 13, 1925, Dear Vice-Chancellor—Owing to an attack recently made on me, which I consider unjustifiable, and the unpleasantness thereby caused, I beg to tender my resignation. I do so in accordance with our original agreement, which provided that after five years' service the engagement might be terminated by six months' notice. I wish to return to England in order to continue my researches, and to complete the materials for two books which I could not finish here, because of the lack of documentary sources. I am anxious, too, to resume practice at the Bar; in England the right to practise is usually granted to the holder of a legal chair. You will remember that I came here understanding that I could be admitted to the South Australian Bar; but the council's subsequent objection I have observed loyally throughout the whole period. Having regard to the fact that I have now completed five years' service, I would ask the council to be kind enough to allow me leave of absence till the end of the present year. I am, yours sincerely, COLEMAN PHILLIPSON.

Council's Reply.

The reply of the council on May 15 was:—

Dear Professor Phillipson—I have read to the council the letter which you have addressed to me, intimating your desire to resign from the Chair of Law at the end of the present year, and requesting that you be granted leave of absence until then. The council has decided to accept your resignation, and to grant you leave of absence when you have completed the work of the present term. You will be paid the salary of the professorship till the end of the year. This will leave you free to resume the valuable work which you gave up to come to Adelaide. Believe me, yours sincerely, W. MITCHELL, Vice-Chancellor.

An Anonymous Communication.

Questioned regarding the meaning of the "attack" and the unpleasantness mentioned in the letter, Professor Phillipson said:—"The crux of the whole matter was my willingness to give private tuition to one or two backward students. The council objected to my doing so. There is nothing dishonorable or wrongful in it, though it may be inexpedient, but there is always somebody or other who is ready to place the worst possible construction on it, and somebody did. It is possible, of course, that the practice may be abused, but why necessarily regard a possibility as an accomplished fact. I am sick and tired of the whole thing. I wish no one ill, not even him who is maliciously disposed to say and think the worst. Therefore, let the person stick another paper on my door worse even than the last one, which was:—'Coleman Phillipson, blackmailer. Get out, you dirty swine.' Also let the person who said he 'wondered I did not snatch his wife's bag' say something worse."

Wanted to Return Home.

"The fact is," continued the professor, "that during the last two years, especially after the council objected to my call to the South Australian bar, I have been desirous of returning home, and but for the dissuasion of my wife, who loves the climate here, I would have already returned to London. It is only there that I can continue my researches, of which

Lord Birkenhead, when Lord Chancellor, wrote to me from the House of Lords in this letter, which I am glad to show you:—'It may be that you will have sufficient leisure to compile that complete history of international law which no one living is more competent to produce.' I may add that Lord Reading, the present Viceroy of India, concluded in the following words a letter which he sent me after his mission to the United States:—'It may interest you to know that you have a good number of admirers in the United States.' Lord Reading was thinking of the influence my publications had in America. Well, it is this work I want to continue; and I cannot possibly do so here. I published one book during my stay here, but I had written it entirely in London. Besides, I am keenly interested in international affairs, and at the Paris Peace Conference I was counsel in international law for the British delegation. It may interest you to see a communication from the present Lord Chief Justice, who refers to certain experiences we had together in Paris:—'You paid a number of visits with me to the other lawyers who were sitting upon the commission to consider the responsibility of those accused of the violations of the laws of war, and I was much interested to find that you had already, by your books, achieved among them a standing which was not only important, but gratifying.' And there is a letter from Lord Hardinge, of Penshurst:—'Dear Mr. Phillipson—On behalf of Mr. Balfour and myself, I wish to thank you most sincerely for the valuable assistance you have been good enough to give the historical section in the compilation of the series of handbooks for the Peace Conference. Those books, which are the product of much learning, literary skill, and hard work ungrudgingly given, have not only earned glowing testimony throughout all ranks of the British delegation, to which they have been a very great benefit, but will undoubtedly prove of lasting utility and interest. With many thanks for your share in their success.—Believe me, yours sincerely (signed), Hardinge, of Penshurst.'

Return to Bar.

"This kind of work interests me deeply. Besides, I shall resume practice at the Bar; and you may, perhaps, remember that some time ago I was offered by the South Australian Committee of Producers a case for the Privy Council. I could not have taken it, because of the University Council's objection to my admission to the Bar here. I would not have dreamt of coming here, if I had not understood that my admission would be allowed. Having completed my five years' service as agreed, I am glad to return home, where I shall find a wide field for my interests, legal, political, and literary. I am afraid I shall no longer be able to inflict lectures on the long-suffering public. They have always listened with patience and enthusiasm to my addresses, and I thank them heartily. It was always a stimulus and an inspiration to me to see fine audiences keenly interested in intellectual questions and international matters."

ADVERTISER 18.5.25. CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL.

The chamber music recital by the Elder Conservatorium String Quartet arranged for to-night promises to be of exceptional interest. The altered arrangements of the hall have proved ideal. The quartet will play on the floor, and the seats will surround them. The audience will therefore hear to perfect advantage a delightful Haydn quartet and the whole quintet of Brahms, with Mr. William Silver at the piano. Miss Hilda Gill will also sing a bracket of Brahms's songs. Tickets are on sale at S. Marshall & Sons, Gawler Place.