

# Forty Years of Service

## Sir Langdon Bonython and the School of Mines

### Complimentary Dinner and Presentation

Recognition of the services of Sir Langdon Bonython as president of the School of Mines and Industries was paid in an enthusiastic manner on Saturday evening at a complimentary dinner tendered to him at the Grosvenor by Associates and Fellows of the Institution to mark the completion of his fortieth consecutive year of office.

The guest of honor was presented with an illuminated address, in which happy and appreciative references were made to his work for the school. The speeches were full of praise for his efforts in the cause of education generally, and acknowledgments of his great personal influence and generous assistance on behalf of students.

The Principal of the School (Mr. F. W. Reid) presided, and at the head table were seated Sir Langdon Bonython, the Chief Justice and Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray), the Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler), the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell), the Warden of the Senate (His Honor Mr. Justice Angus Parsons), the Speaker of the House of Assembly (Hon. G. R. Taylor), the Minister of Education (Hon. H. McInchess), the Lord Mayor (Mr. Lavington Bonython), Professor R. W. Chapman, the Director of Education (Mr. W. J. Adey), Messrs. C. A. H. L. Laybourn, Smith, and Engineer Commander Meares.

#### Messages of Congratulation

The chairman said it was gratifying to see so many present representing all generations of graduates since the beginning of the school. They were particularly pleased to see so many who had travelled from so far, and from long distances in this State to be present. (Applause.) He had received a number of addresses, and presented the order of the Opposition (Hon. L. L. Hill), the president of the Chamber of Commerce (Mr. E. W. Holden), the President of the Manufacturers (Mr. F. N. Simpson), and Dr. Keith Ward.

#### The Guest of Honor

Mr. G. C. Kilgus had felt it a great privilege to be invited to propose the toast of their guest of honor, Sir Langdon Bonython. He regarded it as a happy coincidence that he should be on a visit to Australia at this time, which gave him the opportunity of paying a personal tribute to such a distinguished citizen. The many achievements of Sir Langdon through his very busy and fruitful life would find it difficult to relate, but perhaps the following more convincing than any service he had rendered to the South Australian School of Mines Industries.

#### The Response

Sir Langdon, who was loudly cheered on rising to respond, said— "I am much pleased to be asked with trepidation, to respond to the toast of my health. I am truly grateful for the kind things which have been said about me both by you and Mr. Kilgus in the address. I am not foolish enough to suppose they are all deserved, but at the same time I very much appreciate the generous spirit which has prompted them. And all to you gentlemen who have drunk the toast with so much cordiality I offer my thanks. But I must confess that the prospect of this function has not contributed to my happiness. When I was asked if I would dine with friends who had been

connected with the School of Mines through our guests, I had to spend a little of their time, which we have had in the past. When men are associated with the school for forty years, and that those attending would probably include the Chief Justice and the Premier, and other important people, the feeling of the Lord Mayor I felt quite overawed. I began to wonder whether an attack of influenza might not be a blessing as affording an excuse from a trying situation. (Laughter.)

#### "A Charming Gift"

With no such luck I find myself to-night facing an audience for the most part made up of comparatively young men, who in their little recollection of events that occurred more than forty years ago seem long, but they cover a large part of the average life. In such a period of time so many of our workers fall out of the ranks, and it seems very sad, but such is life, and we can face the inevitable—to burn the candle as they carry on the work. There is no reference to this gathering which is naturally a matter of course. I refer to the part taken in it by old students, which has been mentioned in your address. It is a charming and unexpected nothing of the sort. Although preparations for it must have been made as a very great surprise. The address is enclosed in a volume most interesting to me, and I expect it may be in that respect, I shall refer chiefly to the hundreds of signatures of graduates which it contains gathered from all parts of the world from many countries. I am quite incapable of adequately expressing my feelings at the bottom of my heart, and I am very concerned. The gift, having historical as well as personal interest, I shall treasure it as a precious possession of the home of my family. (Applause.)

#### Dedicating Land for Educational Purposes

The Premier, who was received with applause, said he was glad to be present to do honor to one who had rendered great service to the State. A man could not render more to his community than by assisting higher education. The University grounds, the pleasure of the Minister of Education, and the Government's contribution to the higher education of the State. He was glad to see the school always be citizens of the type of Sir Langdon Bonython, who would take an interest in the educational affairs of the State.

#### Tribute to an Institution

In making the arrangements for the dinner, the speaker wished to know how to pay a compliment to the school because my connection with the school goes back to its origin, and I take their places in mining and anywhere. Men who had graduated at the school held important positions in all parts of the world. They were proud of the school and the University, and I believe they have controlled its destinies. But the school would have been nothing without its students. It is they who have created its great reputation, and in doing that many of them have carved their names for themselves careers which have led to the highest positions in the State. It is their rare distinction, and the developments in various walks of life, which have made the greatest possible pleasure to me. I add that some of our most successful graduates are present with us to-night. (Applause.)

#### Opening of the School

In 1886 a Commission was appointed to consider the question of technical education, of which Sir Langdon was a zealous advocate, was chairman. The Commission, in their report, recommended the establishment of a school of Mines and Metallurgy to give effect to the recommendation of the Playford Government appointed in 1899. Sir John was elected Chairman, and the school was opened in March, 1899. He resigned in the following July, having become Premier of the State, and I became its first Chairman. As some of you know, the school was first conducted in the basement of the Exhibition Building. The accommodation was a deal, but the results, as far as the students were concerned, were quite satisfactory. The school proved a success, but it must not be forgotten that it flourished in exceptional times. The mineral riches of Western Australia were just being opened up, and a mining boom throughout the continent.

#### The School's Great Reputation

Sir Langdon, having related many reminiscences, which kept the audience in roars of laughter, said— "I am sure that you all know what I mean. So far I have said nothing in my opinion of value of detailed information. I have not even told you how many thousands of men have been trained through the school since it was opened in 1899; nor have I enumerated the important names which have filled and filled. I have only said that the school has done the great things they have done, and that is well known. There is no technical institution with a higher reputation than this school, which was established to help in the development of Australia. It has done that more. Its graduates have rendered service to the world in all the continents of the world. (Applause.)

#### Happiness in Hard Work

Mr. J. Laybourn Smith, in proposing

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