

SIR JOHN COCKBURN

**PREMIER, FEDERALIST,
AGENT-GENERAL**

With profound regret we announce the passing in England, in his 80th year, of the Hon. Sir John Alexander Cockburn, K.C.M.G., M.D., formerly Premier of South Australia, and in his time an outstanding figure in our public and official life. More than 30 years ago Sir John left Adelaide as South Australia's chief representative in the Motherland. That was in 1898, and though he resigned the office in 1901 and resided in England ever since, he had throughout the intervening years kept in close touch with his old State. If not exactly in an official capacity, certainly in a very real sense, as a vigilant and faithful friend of both State and Commonwealth. Sir John's home was at Dean's Hill, Harrietsham, Kent, and South Australian visitors to London always received the most hospitable welcome from Sir John and Lady Cockburn, who in quiet, practical, unostentatious ways proved true friends of the Commonwealth.

For a long period Sir John Cockburn was chairman of the Australasian Chamber of Commerce in London, and was on the directorates of a number of Australian companies, including the Australian Mutual Provident Society, as well as the English, Scottish, and Australian Bank. A man of wide sympathies and many and diversified interests, he believed in hard work and plenty of it as the secret of a happy and contented life. His interest in Freemasonry was remarkable. Ever a keen student of the mystics and antiquities of the Order, nothing delighted him more than to take part in lodge ceremonies and festivals and to deliver addresses, the result of special research on Masonic themes. Until well past his seventieth year he was in demand as a lecturer, and his contributions to

was in the vigorous public life of the eighties and nineties of last century during perhaps the stormiest of our political periods. In those days he played an important part in our political history and helped to carry reforms which have had a far-reaching effect in the development and progress of the State. There were intellectual giants in those days, and Cockburn was one of them. His charming personality won him many friends even among his political opponents. He was distinguished for his cultured, convincing speeches, and was most effective in debate. With a wide outlook on affairs, a statesmanlike grasp of public questions, and singular clarity of expression, he was certainly one of the most attractive speakers in Parliament. He remained a member of the Assembly continuously for 14 years. It is a remarkable fact that he outlived every one of his 21 Ministerial colleagues in the four Administrations in which he served. Sir Lancelot Stirling (President of the Legislative Council) is the only one living, still serving in the Legislature, of those who were members of the Assembly when Sir John was elected to Parliament in 1884; and Sir Josiah Symon, K.C., Colonel J. W. Castine, and Mr. E. W. Hawker are the only other survivors of the eleventh Parliament in which he took his seat 45 years ago.

Born at Corsbie, Berwickshire, Scotland, on August 23, 1850, Sir John Cockburn was a son of Thomas Cockburn, descended from the Cockburns of Langton. After attending Cholmeley School, Highgate, he proceeded to King's College, London, where he graduated with first-class honors in medicine and forensic medicine, taking the M.D. degree of London University and its gold medal in 1874. The following year Sir Joseph Verco, a distinguished son of South Australia, won the same University's gold medal in forensic medicine and medicine. In 1871 Sir John Cockburn visited Australia, but it was not till 1875 that he settled here. He went north to Jamestown, where he soon secured a lucrative medical practice. He became widely known and extremely popular, not only because of his professional skill, but for his interest in public affairs. When Jamestown was incorporated a municipality in 1877, Sir John was chosen the first mayor, and held office for three and a half years. In 1881 he was elected a Commissioner of the North Midland Road Board, and interesting himself in the military movement, was appointed a vice-president of the Rifle Volunteer Force and captain of the Jamestown company.

Enters Parliament and Makes a High Reputation

His ambition to enter Parliament was gratified at the general elections in 1884, when he was returned at the head of the poll for Burra district, in which he resided, by a substantial majority over the Hon. W. B. Rounsevell. He was chosen by the Bray Government to move the adoption of the Address in Reply, and his fine delivery on that occasion gave him a high reputation. Sir John Colton formed his second Administration on June 16, 1884, and upon its defeat 12 months later Sir John Cockburn accepted the portfolio of Minister of Education in the first Downer Cabinet, and remained in office for two years. He was Minister when he sought re-election in 1887. This time Sir Frederick Holder, afterwards his Ministerial colleague, headed the poll, with Mr. Rounsevell as his fellow-member. Sir John's defeat was a great surprise. But the following month Mount Barker elected him at the head of the poll. He thereafter resided in Mount Barker, and continued to represent the district until 1898, when he accepted the Agent-Generalship in succession to Mr. Playford.

Following the defeat of the Playford Government in June, 1889, Sir John Cockburn became Premier and Chief Secretary, having as Cabinet colleagues F. W. Holder, J. H. Howe, B. A. Moulden, J. H. Gordon, and T. Burgoyne. He signalled his Premiership by the appointment of a second Minister (though without portfolio) in the Legislative Council, but so strong was the objection to what was regarded as an unconstitutional proceeding that the Minister concerned, Dr. Allan Campbell, resigned his position a fortnight later. The most remarkable act of the Cockburn Ministry was the introduction and passage through Parliament of the progressive land tax. After fourteen months in office the Cockburn Ministry were defeated by Mr. Playford, who returned to power with his old henchman, Mr. Kingston. Two years later Sir Frederick Holder followed Mr. Playford as Premier for four months, and Sir John Cockburn was again Chief Secretary. The next twelve months witnessed a mighty change in South Australian politics. Upon the fall of Sir John Downer's second Cabinet in June, 1893, Mr. Kingston assumed the reins of government. His Cabinet was designated "The Ministry of all the talents." It included three former Premiers—Playford, Cock-

burn and Holder—men who had been strong and bitter opponents, but now with differences cast aside were in the same political fold.

The Kingston Ministry remained in power for six and a half years, the longest period in South Australian history, and had a remarkable record of legislative achievement. In this Government Sir John Cockburn was Minister of Education and Agriculture for nearly five years. He discharged the manifold duties of his portfolio with conspicuous success. The advance of the public education system in all its branches on sound modern lines lay close to his heart, and it was ever his endeavor to afford the best facilities for reaching the highest educational standards. He at least had the satisfaction of seeing the realization of some of his ideals. He was prominently associated with the establishment of the South Australian School of Mines and Industries, which has become one of the great educational institutions of Australia. He was chairman of a Commission with reference to technical education which recommended its establishment, and was its first chairman in 1889, but soon retired on becoming Premier, and was succeeded by Sir Langdon Bonython, who was also a member of the Commission referred to, and who has been the official head of the school for upwards of 40 years.

After entering Parliament Sir John Cockburn gave up his professional work and devoted himself wholly to public affairs. He was always on the side of reform to meet the demands of a growing democracy. Improvement of the State system of education was his chief concern, particularly in its technical and industrial aspects. Through his advocacy an impetus was given to nature study in the schools. Alike in the direction of social legislation, his ideals were high. Women's suffrage and payment of members he helped to place on the Statute-book, and he was a strenuous advocate of the encouragement of local industries protected by a reasonable tariff.

Work in Connection with Federation

Apart from his eminently useful services in relation to purely State politics Sir John Cockburn goes down in Australian history for the part he played in the wider national sphere of Federation. When Premier he accepted the invitation of Sir Henry Parkes to attend the first conference on Federation, held at Melbourne in February, 1890. The following year he was one of the seven delegates from South Australia elected by Parliament to the Australasian Convention in Sydney, presided over by Sir Henry Parkes, and including the venerable figure of Sir George Grey, of New Zealand. Sir John was the last living link with those who attended these two historic gatherings. He was also one of the brilliant South Australian delegation of ten to the National Convention elected in 1897 to draft the Federal Enabling Bill. With his passing there are only eight living of the 50 representatives of the people who framed the Commonwealth Constitution at that convention. Sir Josiah Symon, K.C., and the Hon. P. McM. Glynn, K.C., are the only surviving South Australian members. Sir John Cockburn's high place in the public regard may be judged by the fact that he was elected third on the poll at the popular vote for the South Australian representatives. There is no doubt that had he remained in Australia he would have been included among the distinguished representatives of this State in the first Commonwealth Parliament.

A Prominent Figure in London

The three years that Sir John Cockburn represented this State in London proved a busy and an eventful time. He was a strong man at his post and an able ambassador, who acquitted himself with conspicuous ability and won the highest encomiums. In 1900 he received the honor of K.C.M.G. for his public services, which did not end with his resignation of the office of Agent-General, for he continued in an unofficial and honorary capacity to render assistance to his successors in London, and to aid the State in every possible manner. Sir John represented South Australia and the Commonwealth at numerous congresses and conferences in England, on the Continent, and elsewhere. His public activities, after he had ceased to be Agent-General, covered a wide field, and afforded scope for his erudite mind. His interest in the cause of education never waned. A few of his many activities in this connection may be mentioned, namely chairman of the Nature Study Association, president of the National Association of Manual Training of Teachers, chairman of Swanley Horticultural College, president of the London branch of Child Study Association, vice chairman of the London School of Economics and Political Science, and member of the Council of King's College, his old school, of which he was a Fellow. He was a vice-president and a very active member of the Royal Colonial Institute, now the Royal Empire Society. Sir John wrote extensively on Australian Federation. His educational subjects included articles on the psychology of manual training, hand learning, the physical basis of the mind,

and on muscle, mind, and morals. Years after he had retired from the Agent-Generalship, he was an unsuccessful candidate for a seat in the House of Commons.

Sir John Cockburn possessed great personal charm. Always the perfect gentleman, he ingratiated himself with his fellows, and earned their lasting admiration and esteem. He had a genius for friendship and for helping others, and thought nothing of the sacrifice he often made in doing so. Every task of his life he pursued in a spirit of thoroughness. For his disinterested public services in South Australia during his residence here and in the after years, Sir John Cockburn will live in the hearts of a grateful people. The town of Cockburn, on the Broken Hill line, laid out in 1886, was named after Sir John, who was then Minister of the Crown. His widow, whom he married in 1875, is a daughter of Forbes Scott Brown, of Longformacus, Berwickshire. Their only son, Mr. Piers Cockburn, resides in Adelaide; and their only daughter, Margaret Stuart, is the wife of Colonel Bird, of Hongkong.

Introduced Women's Suffrage

The Hon. F. W. Coneybeer, M.P., stated on Wednesday that he was the only member now in the House of Assembly who was associated with Sir John Cockburn in that House when he resigned in 1898. Mr. Coneybeer said Sir John was a lovable character, a man imbued with great enthusiasm, and an ideal Minister of Education. He had the distinction of moving the second reading of the Women's Franchise Bill. South Australia was the first State in Australia to adopt this franchise, and the second in Australasia, New Zealand having adopted it previously.

Adv. 28-11-29 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH GRANT TO AUSTRALIA

CARNEGIE VOTE OF £50,000

Melbourne, November 27. Advice has been received in Melbourne from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, that the board of trustees has decided to grant a sum of £50,000 in ten yearly instalments of £5,000 each, for the purpose of educational research and service in Australia. The corporation will provide a further £2,500 a year to cover the salary of an executive officer and travelling and administrative expenses. The Carnegie Corporation has approved of the constitution of an Australian Institute of Educational Research, which was drafted at a conference in Melbourne of representatives of all the States. The institute will consist of a council of nine members, one representative for each of the States, and three co-opted members. It is provided that, for the first three years the co-opted members shall be Mr. Frank Tate, formerly Director of Education in Victoria, and Professors A. Mackie and Tasman Lovell, of the Sydney University.

Adv. 28-11-29 UNIVERSITY SENATE COUNCIL ELECTIONS DECLARED

AMENDED REGULATIONS

At a meeting of the Senate of the University of Adelaide on Wednesday afternoon, the annual elections were announced, and several alterations were made to the regulations. Mr. W. J. Adey, Sir Langdon Bonython, Mr. W. J. Isbister, Sir William Mitchell, Dr. W. Ray, and Professor J. McKellar Stewart, who had been nominated for the six vacancies on the Council, were declared elected. Mr. Justice Angas Parsons, who was the only candidate for the position of Warden of the Senate, was declared elected, and Mr. F. W. Eardley was elected as Clerk of the Senate. The Statute of the Tinline scholarship was amended to provide that the scholarship may be awarded on the finals honors examination in the school of modern history, but if there should be no candidate for the honors examination in that school, the scholarship may be awarded on the examinations in history for the ordinary degree of Bachelor of Arts. An alteration was also approved for the degree of Bachelor of Arts by the addition of geography to the curriculum. A course of lectures will be given in that subject next year. The regulations in regard to the degree of Master of Arts were amended so as to make clear the subjects which



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the literature of the craft were regarded as of great importance and value. Among his numerous official positions in London were those of first Master of the King's Colonial Lodge, first Deputy Master of the Royal Colonial Institute Lodge, past ruler of a number of Masonic bodies associated with the Royal Colonial Institute, and President of the Masonic Study Society and of the International Masonic Club. While in South Australia he took a prominent part in the craft, and rose to high office in the Grand Lodge, which he helped to found, and of which he was one of the first grand officers. He ranked as Past Deputy Grand Master of South Australia and Past Grand Deacon in the Grand Lodge of England, where he remained up to the time of his decease the representative of the Grand Lodge of South Australia.

Intellectual Giants in These Days

Having been away from the State for more than three decades, Sir John was practically unknown personally to the younger generation of South Australians. But there are still living in this State many who remember the commanding figure and leader that he