

TRIBUTES IN THE ASSEMBLY

"A PRIVILEGE TO KNOW HIM."

At the moment of his death the House of Assembly, which had been through another all-night sitting on the Constitution Bill, was in recess for an hour, and when the sad news was telephoned to the Ministers the deepest regret was expressed by every member in the House. It had been intended to resume the sitting at 10 o'clock, and go on indefinitely, but as with one voice the whole of the legislators agreed that it was due to the memory of their late colleague of the Upper House that an immediate adjournment should be made after the Speaker again took the chair.

The Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake), in making the announcement of Sir John's death, said he was sure every member of the House and every citizen in South Australia would be most deeply grieved and moved by the news that an hon. member of the Legislature and a man highly respected by everybody—he referred to the Hon. Sir John Duncan—had been taken away by the hand of death. The feeling of every member of the House must be deeply touched by the occurrence, and in the circumstances they were hardly prepared to go on with the business in connection with the Constitution Bill. Sir John Duncan had been recognised throughout the State as a high-minded man, and he enjoyed the respect of every person in South Australia. Members would be deeply sorry to think that they would no more see his face in the halls of the Legislature. He was sure he was voicing the feeling of every member when he expressed the opinion that the clash of politics and the keenness—he would not say acrimony—that arose from the stress of the fight they were now engaged in were not consonant with the more poignant feelings at the sad loss forced on them. They had the greatest sympathy with the family of Sir John Duncan, and he considered they would do well if at that stage they adjourned the sitting of the House.

The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Vaughan), on behalf of every member of Opposition, appreciated very much the sentiments expressed by the Premier. In the shadow of the death of one whom they all regarded very highly—whom he might even say they loved—the acrimony of debate must pass away. It was a fitting occasion for them to pay a tribute to the memory of one who had played such an important part in the development of the State. They all appreciated the high character and strict integrity of Sir John Duncan. He was a man as honorable as the day, and it was a privilege to know him as a brother legislator. He could speak on behalf of every member of the Labor Party inside and outside Parliament. They all regretted to the full the loss South Australia had sustained in the death of a man who was in the first rank of high citizenship, and who had done great service to the State both as a legislator and as a man of affairs.

Mr. Southwood felt he could not allow the occasion to pass without saying a few words. He did not speak because of any intimate personal acquaintance with Sir John, but because he represented the district that had first returned that gentleman to Parliament in South Australia. It was the old Port Adelaide district, of which Wallaroo had formed a very important part, that first sent him into the House of Assembly. Sir John came from the Wallaroo portion of the district, where he had worked in the office of the Wallaroo and Moonta Mining Company, and it had been largely through the efforts of the miners in those towns that he had been introduced into public life. He most truly sympathised with the relatives of the late hon. gentleman.

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Mr. A. J. McLachlan, the president of the Liberal Union, said:—"I was greatly shocked when I heard of Sir John Duncan's death, because the news that had been published seemed to indicate that he was making good progress towards recovery. Sir John was deservedly esteemed, not only by members of the Liberal Party, among whom he was a stalwart pillar, but by every section of the community, for his sterling integrity. His splendid services to South Australia in his legislative and many other capacities will long be remembered, and his name will go down among all that is best in the history of the Liberal Union. Sir John was a member of the executive of the union, and took an active interest in it, and his views always commanded the respect which his experience and good judgment and his keen sense of fair play entitled them to."

SORROW IN THE COUNTRY.

Auburn, October 8.
Every resident of the district and all shades of political opinion expressed profound sorrow upon the receipt of the news of the sudden death of Sir John Duncan, who had been connected with this district during the whole of his life. Sincere sympathy with the family is felt by everyone here.

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THE LATE SIR JOHN DUNCAN.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE.

A memorial service to the late Sir John Duncan was conducted in the Flinders-street Presbyterian Church by the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Davidson, on Sunday evening, when there was a large congregation. The pulpit and choir stalls were adorned with white flowers, and special music was sung under the direction of the church organist, Mr. W. R. Pybus.

Dr. Davidson, who paid a high tribute to the domestic qualities of the late legislator, based his remarks on Genesis xix., 28-33, which records the death of Jacob. He said when Sir John Duncan received the honor of knighthood from the King the fine humanity in him became even more apparent than it had previously been. Personally, he found him more affable, open, approachable, and genial. His life grew in true nobility as he advanced in years. He had the noble qualities of the true politician—a sense of justice and fair play. Like most Scotsmen, he was reticent about the deeper matters of personal religion. They were to him too sacred to be talked much about. Perhaps he had not done justice to himself in this connection. He never sought censure, but he never courted applause. He was opposed to gambling in any form, and had declared that he would vote against the totalizer on every possible opportunity. Sir John was a true-blue Presbyterian, an elder of the church, which was the church of his fathers. In the arena of public life he made no reference to his religion. He knew what a certain section of the community would think if he did, what miserable interpretations would be placed on his actions, and what false motives would be attributed to him. In his home he kept business apart from his domestic life. Business and home-life were with him two different things. It was his home that saved him from becoming a mere politician. His home was his true kingdom and he lived secure in it, free from the wear and tear of public life. A conservative he was of the home and family life. But he was no high-and-dry Tory. He had remarked that there was no room for the high-and-dry old Tories in a young country like South Australia. He was ever anxious that things should develop steadily and smoothly, and that there should be something of continuity in national progress.

At the close of the service Mr. Pybus played the "Dead march" in "Saul" (Handel).

WALLAROO, October 9.—The death of Sir John Duncan caused great regret. No one was better known and more highly esteemed. He always took a keen interest in anything proposed for the advancement of the mining towns. Many residents of Wallaroo have kindly recollections of him in his early days. His father, the late Mr. John Duncan, was one of the first elders of the Wallaroo Presbyterian Church. Sir John always manifested a deep interest in the church, and by his death it will lose one of their best and truest friends. Flags were half-mast at the Town Hall, smelting works, and on private flag-poles today in respect to his memory.

high principles, and he was a man of exceptionally strong character, holding stanchly to what he thought to be right, and he was open and fearless in the expression of his opinions. At this juncture in public affairs he will be much missed, and the district he represented so long in the Legislative Council will have a difficulty in finding an equally able and worthy successor. The Government have conveyed to Lady Duncan and the family an expression of deep sympathy and the great loss that the community has sustained."

The leader of the Legislative Council (Hon. J. G. Bice) was out of town, but the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. T. Pascoe) spoke for him. He said:—"I don't think there was a man in Parliament who was respected to the extent Sir John Duncan was by all parties. He was straightforward, courteous, kind, considerate; indeed, I don't think anyone can say too much in praise of the deceased gentleman. Personally we have been great friends. My feelings towards him were more than feelings of respect—they amounted to affection. His death is the biggest blow I have received in politics."

The Hon. E. Lucas, the Whip of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council and the deputy-leader, said:—"As a colleague of the late Sir John Duncan, with whom I labored in the Legislative Council for 14 years, I am deeply grieved at his somewhat sudden demise. The sense of loss, which is mine at the moment, will, I feel sure, be realised not only by every member of the State Parliament, but also by the people of South Australia as a whole. My late colleague was a gentleman in every sense of the term—one whom to know was to love and admire. Earnest, honest, fearless in the pursuit of his duty, and possessing a wide knowledge of State affairs, in addition to sound practical judgment, he has for many years stood in the front rank of South Australian legislators. As a colleague he was loyal, sympathetic, and generous, a tower of strength to the cause he espoused, and considerate for those whose views differed from his own. His life has exemplified Cardinal Wolsey's address to Cromwell, 'Be just and fear not. Let all thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's.'"

The Hon. A. W. Styles, leader of the Labor Party in the Legislative Council, said:—"It was with profound sorrow that I learned of the death of the late Hon. Sir John Duncan this morning. My acquaintanceship with the late leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party in the Legislative Council has only extended over the last three years and during those years I have learnt to know the late Sir John Duncan, and to know him was to respect and admire him. He was one of Nature's gentleman, a sterling character and his high principles and unswerving integrity marked all his actions. As a political opponent he was esteemed as a good, honest fighter, and although I was not in accord with the genial knight on all occasions, one could not help admiring his candid opinions and being impressed by their genuineness. It will take time to realise the loss which the community in general and the deceased knight's friends and acquaintances in particular, must sustain by the death of our late friend. I desire to express my personal sympathy with the widow and family in their sad loss."

The Hon. F. S. Wallis (ex-leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council) said:—"The late Sir J. J. Duncan will be greatly missed from the Legislative Council. As leader of his party in that Chamber he was a model of courtesy in his bearing towards those politically opposed to him. The members of the Labor Party in both Houses of Parliament—particularly those in the House in which he had a seat—entertained towards him the friendliest feelings, recognising in him one who possessed all the best instincts of a true gentleman. Emphatic in his manner in debate when quite sure of his ground, he exhibited the utmost open-mindedness on any subject with which he was not thoroughly familiar, the thoughtful cautiousness so characteristic of his countrymen being in him specially pronounced. The Council has not seemed complete whenever the late knight has been absent from his place, and it is difficult at once to realise that that place will know him no more. In his death the State has lost a legislator who, during his long career, recognised the responsibility of his position and ever acted as his sense of duty prompted him. Those who had been longest associated with him in political life held him in the highest esteem, and by all who knew him his memory will be cherished with the most affectionate regard."