

Advertiser, July 20/12

MR. JAMES BRYCE.

ENTERTAINED BY THE MINISTRY.

A THOUGHTFUL ADDRESS

The Right Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador to the United States, was entertained at luncheon by the Government at Parliament House on Friday. In addition to the Ministers present the invited guests were his Excellency the Governor, his Honor the Chief Justice (Sir Samuel Way), the Speaker of the House of Assembly (Hon. L. O'Loughlin), the Chairman of Committees (Mr. S. B. Radall), the Government Whip (Mr. G. Ritchie), the leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council (Hon. F. S. Wallis), the leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly (Hon. J. Verran), the chairman of the Liberal Party (Mr. A. McDonald), the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. Lavington Bonython), Sir John Duncan, and representatives of the press.

After the usual loyal toast had been honored, the Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) said it gave them all great pleasure to see his Excellency the Governor with them on that occasion. They could not have the Governor in the Assembly, but they were always glad to have him as near as possible to the Legislative Chamber, and that was in the dining-room at Parliament House. He was confident they would all endorse the view that South Australia had never had a more popular Governor than his Excellency. (Cheers.) At all times both he and Lady Bosanquet had shown a keen desire to become thoroughly acquainted with the people and institutions of South Australia, and in every possible way to help forward the interests of this State. He had much pleasure in proposing his Excellency's health. (Cheers.)

The Governor, who had a warm reception, said he did not anticipate he would be called upon to respond to such a toast on that occasion, but he desired to thank the Premier very much for the kind words said, and those present for the reception of the toast. He wished also to say that he was much struck with the remarkable unanimity and exceptional spontaneity of the demonstrations of welcome that had been tendered in South Australia to their distinguished visitor, the Right Hon. James Bryce. (Cheers.) This unsolicited movement on the part of the citizens must be very gratifying to Mr. and Mrs. Bryce. (Cheers.)

The British Ambassador.

The Premier, in proposing "The British Ambassador at Washington," said there had been many distinguished visitors to Parliament House, but never one more distinguished than their guest, Mr. Bryce, whom they were delighted to honor at the little informal luncheon. (Cheers.) They all knew the high position Mr. Bryce occupied in the councils of the great Empire, and in the great Parliament of the Empire. They knew also that at the present time their guest exerted a very great influence indeed in furthering that which must be of the greatest importance to mankind, namely, the peace of the world. (Cheers.) As the connecting link between the great peoples of England and America Mr. Bryce held a most important and influential position. (Hear, hear.) They understood the Ambassador was in Australia for rest. (Laughter.) From the accounts of his movements in the newspapers from day to day, and the records of interesting and illuminating addresses delivered by Mr. Bryce, it was evident that his visit was far from being in the nature of a rest. It must be interesting to Mr. Bryce to note how closely the Parliaments of Australia had been modelled upon the great mother of Parliaments, and that in Australia they were endeavoring to uphold the best traditions

of the Imperial Parliament. No doubt it had afforded Mr. Bryce much pleasure in going through the different legislative halls of the Commonwealth to observe the strong desire of Australia to utilise those great powers of self-government for which they were so much indebted to the home Government. When Mr. Bryce returned to the old country they would be delighted to hear him report on the loyalty, veneration, and affection which existed towards the old land. (Cheers.) He was certain that among the people of Australia there was the feeling that whereas formerly the Empire was regarded as belonging to England, the view now was that England belonged to the Empire. (Cheers.)

An Imperial Ambassador.

Mr. Bryce, who was received with cheers, said he was heartily grateful to the Premier and his colleagues for their great kindness in inviting him to meet them. As his Excellency the Governor had said, he and his wife had been deeply touched by the spontaneous welcome they had received since their arrival in Australia. Although at times the demands upon them had been numerous, it had always been a pleasure to meet them. He had not been having much rest, it was true, but he thought those who had been accustomed to that class of work in a pretty long life could do without much rest, and usually found their relaxation in a change of occupation. (Cheers.) They received a stimulus from new ideas, from a contact of new minds and associations, and their interest in the world and its progress was being constantly quickened, enlightened, and enlarged by new conditions, which pointed to the future and prevented them from dwelling too much upon the losses of the past, because they had the future to repair them. (Cheers.) He thanked the Premier for his generous reference to the work he had been trying to do in the United States with a view to promoting the most cordial relations between the great American branch of the race and those branches which still lived under the Union Jack in all parts of the Empire. (Cheers.) In the course of his work he had come to realise that he was as much an ambassador from Canada as from Great Britain, because of the questions which concerned the Imperial and United States Governments in three-fourths, at least, Canada was directly and primarily interested. In like manner he felt he could also regard himself as an ambassador from Australia, charged to maintain Australian interests, as well as those of Canada and the other portions of the Imperial Dominions. (Cheers.)

Australia's Point of Contact.

Up to the present Australia and the United States had comparatively few points of contact, but one was mentioned in the newspapers this week, in which Australia had a direct interest. They could rely upon it that it was the great wish of the Home Government, and the wish of everyone who represented the Government at Washington, to be as zealous and earnest in defending the interests of the Dominions as of the mother country. (Cheers.) They considered themselves to be all in the same boat, all equally interested in furthering every part of the Empire. (Cheers.) That was their strength. Apart from local interests there were great interests common to them all. In order to maintain those great interests they must maintain the interests at every point of the Empire. That had always been, and ever would be, their object. He was particularly glad to meet the Ministers in this great State, because he had been for a good part of his life concerned with administration in Imperial Governments, and it was always interesting to observe how the administration was conducted in those countries which had adopted England's institutions and traditions.

The Best System of Administration.

He did not think it was possible to get a better system of administration than that under which Ministers of the Crown were also representative of and responsible to the people, with whom they could keep in close touch in the conduct of public affairs. (Hear, hear.) Ministers, by having seats in Parliament, and being obliged to defend their measures, and by being constantly exposed to a continual fire of questions from members of Parliament on all acts of the Administration, were able to feel the pulse of public opinion in a way not possible under any other system. (Hear, hear.) Parliament and the Administration were then in close touch with each other. When the representatives of the people wished to convey the views of their constituents to the Ministers they

should have many private and unofficial means of communication. Half his own administrative acts were influenced by the constant talks which he used to have in the lobbies of the House of Commons with the members who came to represent their views or those of their constituents about particular measures. Over and over again it would have been impossible to administer the department if it had not been for the help of the members in the manner he had described. (Hear, hear.) By hearing their views objections were removed and the way made clearer. Those interviews, by the way, were not confined to one side of the House. Although such an interchange of opinion was more frequent with members on one's side of the House, a member of the Opposition always felt perfectly free to come to the Minister and say what was in his mind. (Hear, hear.) The Minister welcomed that—he would have been foolish if he had not done so—because it helped him to understand what the objections were and thus remove them. (Hear, hear.) Surely if there was to be serious opposition to any proposal it was far better for the Ministers to know it in that way. He thought the private life of the House of Commons in the lobbies, dining, and smoking rooms, and on the terraces was of the greatest possible value and help to the conduct of public business, as contrasted with the system in which Ministers had no direct connection with the Legislature at all. (Hear, hear.)

A Permanent Civil Service.

He felt sure that in Australia they found similar benefits to those they enjoyed in England. They had in the Commonwealth preserved one feature of British government which they looked upon as being of the greatest value. That was the permanent Civil Service removed from politics. (Hear, hear.) Speaking as an ex-Minister he did not think their system of government would be possible if they did not have a large body of trained men permanently in the service; men who understood all the details, and who, when they came into office, guided their steps, which at first were a little wandering and uncertain, until they knew the facts with which they had to deal.

The Premier—Hear, hear.

Mr. Bryce believed it was a very good thing that the head of the department should change, because sometimes he saw things which a permanent official did not see. (Hear, hear.) Sometimes the Ministerial head of the department would be struck by an anomaly or the need for some reform which might be introduced, and sometimes the Minister was able to bring the fresh breath of political discussion into what might be the stagnant atmosphere of the office. The permanent service, to be efficient, should be removed from all parties. (Cheers.) Admission to it should not be by personal or party favor or in obedience to party motives. Promotion should be by merit. He was delighted to hear that in all the States of the Commonwealth this was practised, and he hoped it would ever be so. (Cheers.)

The Rural Problem.

What struck him most in touring Australia was the need for more agricultural workers. All the States appeared to require a larger proportion of people to work on the land and develop it. Australia had limitless resources, which with development would make for wealth in the cities as well as in the rural towns. (Hear, hear.) Much as he admired the beauties of the cities he had visited—the admirable situation of Sydney, the stateliness of Melbourne, and the peculiar and singular charm of Adelaide, with its surrounding parks and the lovely range of hills rising beyond it, and into whose sylvan recesses he had had the advantage of exploring during the last day or two—he felt that the city population was disproportionate to that of the country. (Hear, hear.) He could not say that that was a permanently wholesome condition. Man originally was intended to live in the country for economic and health reasons. It was impossible to have ideal conditions in the large cities. Adelaide had not yet reached that stage, but if the city grew as the State progressed it would one day reach a point at which it would be hard to maintain conditions favorable for the development of a strong and healthy race. (Hear, hear.) Work in the cities was becoming more and more the work of machinery, while work in the country, especially in a genial climate like that of Australia, was done in the open air under conditions eminently favorable to the development of a strong and vigorous population. He earnestly hoped that the policy of immigration would be continued so that the disproportion would be corrected.