

“SENATE HOUSE OF UNIVERSITY”

Foundation Stone Of Bonython Great Hall Laid

“PRINCELY GIFT TO STATE”

Tributes Paid To Donor

Forecasts of the important part the Bonython Great Hall was destined to play in the educational life of the University and the State, and tributes to the public-spirited benefactions, particularly in the cause of education, of Sir Langdon Bonython, whose munificent gift made the hall possible, were mingled yesterday afternoon when the foundation stone of the building was laid by Sir Langdon.

A brilliant gathering saw the ceremony. On the flag-decorated dais were the Governor (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven), the Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray), the Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell), members of the Senate, the Premier (Mr. Butler), and members of the Ministry, the President of the Legislative Council (Sir David Gordon), the Speaker of the Assembly (Mr. Nicholls), members of both Houses of Parliament, and members of the professorial staff, their scholastic robes giving a bright touch of color to the gathering. Several hundred people gathered on the lawns, and heard the speeches through broadcasting apparatus.

The Governor was met and escorted to his seat by the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Professor Chapman.

Recalling the speech of the Chancellor of 1879, the Bishop of Adelaide (Rev. Augustus Short), when the foundation stone of the first University building was laid, Sir George Murray said that mention was then made of the need for a Senate House. The pile of buildings the Bishop had foreseen had arisen, and that afternoon they began officially the building of the Senate House. The means had been provided by a noble gift—which, with interest added, had grown to more than £46,000—from Sir Langdon Bonython, a generous patron of education and a public benefactor. One member of the Senate who saw the ceremony of 54 years ago, the Rev. F. Slaney Poole, was present that afternoon, and two other members of the original Senate were living. They rejoiced that the culmination of the Chancellor's hopes was likely to be attained in their lifetime.

“The description of generous patron of education does not do Sir Langdon Bonython full justice,” the Chancellor said, “for he has been an ardent worker in the cause and no mere looker-on. He was the chairman of the Adelaide School Board from 1883 to 1901; he was the first to propose the establishment of the South Australian School of Mines and Industries; and he has been its president from 1889 until now; he was chairman of the council of the Roseworthy Agricultural College from 1895 to 1902; he has been a member of the University Council since 1916. His benefactions include £6,500 for the erection of the metallurgical laboratory at the School of Mines, £20,000 for the endowment of the chair of law in the University, now called the Bonython Professorship, and £40,000 for the erection of this building, which the council has resolved shall, in his honor, be named the Bonython Hall.

“And even these are only a portion of his great services to the community. As editor and proprietor of ‘The Advertiser,’ he exercised enormous influence on the political, economic, and social life of the State; he was a member of the first and second Commonwealth Parliaments; and he was Chairman of the Commonwealth Literary Fund from its institution in 1903 till 1928. For his services to education he received the honor of knighthood in 1898, and for his services to the Commonwealth he was raised to the dignity of K.C.M.G. in 1919.”

Ornament To City

Sir Langdon Bonython had in mind when he offered to pay for the erection of the hall, one of the type to be found in the Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, and the Inns of Court in London, and splendidly exemplified in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney. As the University had a rectory, the Bonython Hall would rarely, if ever, be used for dining purposes. The Elder Hall would be devoted mainly to its original purpose of a concert hall. The Bonython Hall would be the proper Senate House of the University. The commemoration and other great meetings would be held there, and degrees would, for the most part, be conferred within it. Both halls would be needed at examination time. Apart from its uses, however, the

Bonython Hall would be one of the greatest ornaments of the city. Mr. Walter Bagot, the architect, had designed it to complete the North terrace front of the University in a manner worthy of its site. The interior would be magnificent. Portraits, busts, and memorial windows would, in due time, be installed there. Every generation of University men would regard it with pride and admiration, and the name of its munificent donor would be held in reverence by them throughout the ages.

Laying Of Stone

At the request of Mr. Walter Bagot, the Chancellor presented to Sir Langdon Bonython a silver trowel with which to lay the stone. Before the block of Murray Bridge freestone, in the North terrace facade of the building was swung into position, an hermetically sealed glass container in which were newspapers of the day and current University publications, was placed in a niche beneath it. As the stone was lowered home on its bed, Sir Langdon Bonython tapped it and declared it “well and truly laid.”

Thanking the Chancellor for his remarks, Sir Langdon Bonython said that all the kind things might not have been deserved, but they were pleasant to hear, and he appreciated the spirit which prompted them. The University had no more distinguished graduate than Sir George Murray, who had filled the highest offices of the State with rare ability, and had won the admiration of the whole Commonwealth.

“I need hardly say that it has given me much pleasure to lay the foundation stone of the great hall of the University,” said Sir Langdon Bonython. “Many years have elapsed since I first contemplated providing the money for its erection. More than twenty years ago Mr. Laybourne Smith and myself were in Sydney in connection with the work of the School of Mines, of which Mr. Smith was then the registrar. We visited the University and inspected the hall. I remember I was so much impressed that I then told Mr. Smith that it was my intention to provide the University of Adelaide with a similar hall. But nothing was made public until 1920, when it was announced that I had arranged with the Government of South Australia to pay the sum required for the erection of the hall to the Chancellor of the University in 1930. The explanation of the money not being made available in 1920 is that at that time the whole of the land now held had not been vested in the University. There was even talk of transferring the University to Parkside. In the circumstances, it was, of course, impossible to proceed with the erection of the building.”

Feature Of University

“The great hall is a special feature, which gives character and distinction to a university. In it all the most important functions take place, and it is, therefore, desirable that the surroundings should be such as to create the right atmosphere and cause graduates to feel proud of the University with which they have been associated. Besides, in the hall are memorials, in portrait, bust, or stained glass window, of those who have carried on the work of the University, or in other ways have assisted in its development. The Ad-

elaide hall will be as large as that in Sydney, and will also resemble it in being a distinguished illustration of Gothic architecture.

“As may be supposed, I have been keenly interested in the University—not only as a member of the Council, but also because it has worked in conjunction with the School of Mines, of which I have been president since 1889. The first School of Mines Council included Professor Sir Edward Stirling, Professor Rennie, and Professor Tate. Later Professor Sir William Bragg joined the council, and more recently Professor Chapman and Professor Kerr-Grant have become members.

“The new hall extends the area of the University buildings further towards the boundary which separates the land allotted to the University from that set apart for the School of Mines. The councils of these institutions many years ago wisely determined to avoid any unnecessary duplication of teaching in engineering subjects and entered into an agreement which has been productive of a very harmonious relationship. Students taking professional courses at the School of Mines do much of their work in the classrooms and laboratories of the University, and engineering students of the University attend the School of Mines for a part of their technical instruction.

Association With School Of Mines

“In the course of years this has brought about a very intimate connection. Mr. H. W. Gartrell, the University lecturer on mining, is in charge of the ore-dressing laboratory at the School of Mines. The University gives an engineering degree in the Department of Architecture, but the School of Architecture is at the School of Mines. This school is now officially recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects as a University school. In mechanical engineering, and in metallurgy also, University students do most of the work of their final year at the School of Mines. The agreement has undoubtedly worked to the advantage of both institutions and to the advantage of the State. I trust that the close and happy relationship thus established will be allowed to continue and to grow. The Royal School of Mines of London, which was for many years the principal school of its kind in the British Empire, is now a part of the great University of London, and that is the kind of development that seems to be the natural one here.

“Memory carries me back to the day when the foundation stone of the original very ornate University building was laid. I remember it well. I should have been astonished had I been told that fifty-four years later I would lay the foundation stone of the great hall. I may state that I knew personally all the past Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors. They were men of distinction—men who did well the work with which they were entrusted. Of the Chancellors, I was best acquainted with Chief Justice Way. By general consent he was a great lawyer, and perhaps I may be permitted to add that in my opinion he was also a great man. His idea of public service carried him over a wide field, and there was nothing with which he was associated that did not very materially benefit by his active interest. This was specially true of the University, of which he was Chancellor for 33 years. As to the past Vice-Chancellors, there was one, a close personal friend, in regard to whom I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to put on record a thoroughly deserved tribute. I refer to John Anderson Hartley. He had a high conception of duty and, what is more, lived up to it. His work was to him a vocation. Greater leisure and more money might have been his, but they had no attractions. He felt that he was called to carry out the task he had undertaken, and, having this conviction, he was quite content. In connection with our public schools he rendered service of the highest value. May it be true of him, quoting words from ‘Ecclesiasticus,’ that his ‘name liveth for evermore.’

“To the past Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, and of course to the present Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell), as well as to all who have been associated with them, great credit is due for the position which the University of Adelaide occupies today amongst the Universities of the world.” (Applause.)

Thanks To Donor

Moving a vote of thanks to Sir Langdon Bonython, the Vice-Chancellor said the hall would be for all time the central gathering place of the University, and the home of its memorials and history. While a gift to the University, it was also a gift to North terrace, worthy of the north side, and he hoped that the south side would try to be worthy of the north. It was also a gift to the people of Adelaide. It would help the community to be proud of what belonged to them, for belonging to the University meant belonging to all. From it, for centuries to come, men would go out who, for good or ill, would be in charge of all that which was committed to the

professions.

It needed no imagination to see the responsibility for the future which would rest on the University and on the State collectively and on Parliament. And it did not need much imagination to see why the long history of that building would mean everything to the future history of the State. South Australia had had by far the worst of the deal in the division of the continent, and, therefore, it had the honor above all the other States, of proving that great quality was always greater than good fortune, great numbers, or great size. (Applause.)

If all the State gave thanks for Sir Langdon Bonython's gift, there was a special reason why undergraduates, graduates, lecturers and professors should thank him. They had chosen a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth, and they might welcome the hall as a temple of thanksgiving, and even though students sitting for examinations in the hall might find it a place of repentance or lamentation, rather than a temple of thanksgiving, they could still worship, and perhaps aspire. That was one reason why they welcomed the hall. It had come from the same inspiration that built cathedrals.

“Those are the things in Sir Langdon Bonython's mind that he could not very well bring forward,” said Sir William Mitchell, “but we know them very well. North terrace, Adelaide, the State, and particularly the University know them. It is with them in mind that I move our vote of thanks.”

Education A Hobby

Supporting the vote of thanks, Professor Chapman said the laying of foundations was no new thing for Sir Langdon Bonython. Many years ago he laid the foundation of a great business enterprise, and later he laid the foundation of the School of Mines. The success of both had been largely owing to his continued attention and personal care. Apart from those whose life work had been in the educational field, few men in Australia could compare with Sir Langdon Bonython for the practical assistance, both by personal service and munificent monetary gifts, that he had made to the cause of education.

The success of our democracy lay in having a well informed and well educated people. Realising that principle,

Sir Langdon Bonython had made education his hobby.

“If our buildings are to reflect the character of our people,” Professor Chapman said, “our finest buildings should not be hotels and cinema theatres, but should be those devoted to the causes which stand for our highest ideals. How are we to secure this in a democracy? The institutions concerned in the teaching of these ideals cannot do it, for they are not businesses run at a profit. The Government cannot put up such buildings, especially in times like these, or it would be charged with wanton extravagance. If we are to have such buildings, therefore, we can only have them through the generosity of public-spirited citizens such as Sir Langdon Bonython. His gift is the culminating deed of a long lifetime into which have been crowded many deeds of service to the community in the great cause of education. He deserves our lasting gratitude.” (Applause.)

The vote was carried with acclamation, and at the call of the Chancellor the gathering gave three cheers for the donor of the hall.