

11. PEOPLE OF PROPERTY (1946)

We open our Record of the 1945-46 Session with a word of congratulation to ourselves on having become owners of our premises.

In 1908 the Club's tenure of the premises at the Academy of Arts (which was part of the estate of one of the founders, C. W. Mitchell, who died in 1903) was so uncertain that it was necessary to contemplate a change. By the enterprise of a few members a Syndicate was formed to purchase 7, Higham Place, and a considerable sum was expended on the renovation and improvement of the building. The shares in the Syndicate were held by members of the Club and, as time passed and some of these members with it, the shares they held were acquired by one of them who thus obtained a controlling interest in the property. In 1929 the building was in an unsatisfactory condition and several improvements were essential. The Syndicate, asked to do what was necessary and to increase the rent, declined to do so. Steps were then taken to "buy out" the Syndicate, and after prolonged negotiation a price was agreed upon. It was then the problem to find, not only the purchase price but a sum estimated at £500 for improvements. The Brothers F. B. and A. J. Fenwick generously met the cost of the purchase and also lent the Club £200 towards improvements as they involved an expenditure of £700 instead of £500 as estimated. The members of the Club voluntarily subscribed £500.

The Club now paid the Bros. Fenwick rent which was later reduced to a sum which might, without exaggeration, be called "nominal." Generosity could scarcely go further. But with generosity there was also foresight. Realising that all men are mortal, and that one's heirs might not have the same interests and sympathies, the Bros. Fenwick, when renewing the lease in 1945, intimated their wish that the Club should purchase the house before another five years had passed, and that they were willing to sell at the price for which they had acquired the premises.

The appeal for gifts and loans of money without interest sent to all members produced within a few months the sum of £2.154. with the promise of further contributions later, and the transfer of ownership

was completed before the end of 1945.

We began with congratulations: let us close with thanks - thanks to our former landlords, and thanks to the generous members who have made the transaction possible.

S.S.

The Pen and Palette since its very early days has preferred to entertain its guests in its own rooms. The celebration of its Jubilee, however, demanded a more roomy apartment and the Liberal Club Dining Room provided accommodation for this particularly joyous occasion and the assembly of nearly one hundred members and guests.

An excellent banquet prepared the assembly for the speeches of the evening. The first, in welcome to our Guest of Honour, the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor A. Charlton Curry, was proposed by Bro. Alan Wilson in a particularly happy and witty speech. Bro. Wilson has established a reputation for fluency and felicity on the subjects allotted to him or chosen by him for his delivery, and all members welcome the occasions when he is heard.

The Lord Mayor in his reply showed an equal degree of oratorical excellence and his appeal to the citizens of Newcastle there assembled revealed the sincere devotion of its chief citizen to the well being and cultural interests of the people of this ancient city, whose roots were set in the time of the Romans: whose history has been closely associated with that of English progress, and whose citizens, as coal miners, shippers, merchants, legislators, and members of the armed forces had taken no insignificant part in the well-being of the realm and of the Empire.

In proposing the Pen and Palette Club, Professor Butt reviewed the history of the Club: its inception, its function as a cultural centre in the City, its entertainment of notable people and its celebrated Potpie Suppers.

Bro. Jennens Hackett's reply covered in some detail the history of the Club: its notable occasions, its outstanding personalities and its happy faculty of bringing together people who mattered in various

walks of life in the district. He made welcome reference to the part played by the late Charles Williams in the inculcation of those attributes of the mind and spirit that had ensured the fulfilment of the purpose for which it had been founded.

In his treatment of the Open Toast Bro. S. Sweet selected some of the occasions, on which certain well-known guests were entertained, to remind us of the elements of humour that attended the Supper nights. He stressed his belief that in its present membership the Club has acquired new blood that would not only maintain the tradition, but would add lustre to its records.

A final short speech by Bro. Renwick, past-President of the Club, who had come from Edinburgh to be present on this Jubilee Night, reminded us all how much membership of the Club means to each one of us, and how its special character engenders a lasting affection.

S.S.

