

### ADDRESS BY ACTING PRESIDENT.

Mr. Rose, the Vice-President, delivered the following address, 16th November, 1870:—

“Gentlemen,—It is now my pleasing duty to address to you a few brief remarks on the inauguration of this Association. I had wished this duty had fallen on a President but as there has been some delay in the election of that officer, I have been requested to give an address this evening. As, no doubt, you are all aware, the primary object for which this Association has been formed is to bring together members of the engineering fraternity, to read papers, and discuss various scientific topics in connection with engineering. Kindred institutions have of late years sprung up in nearly every manufacturing centre of Great Britain; and it is thought that Sydney should no longer be without its own. The necessity has been long felt, and we therefore, to-night, meet to inaugurate under favourable auspices an institution which every member will be anxious to see rival those above referred to. It is generally admitted that there is a great deal of isolated talent in the colony—talent which it will be the province of this society to foster, and we shall welcome anyone having an idea to communicate, and who wishes to have it thoroughly sifted. There is no excuse now; the only thing to be done is to come and join us. The main object of this Association will be our mutual improvement. Each individual member cannot hope to excel in all branches of engineering; some will take kindly to one, some to another. Well, by meeting together we shall be able to interchange our ideas, the result being we shall most probably be wiser, and I trust better men. Some have objected that this society will not be favourably received by our large firms; but if our meetings be conducted in a proper spirit, I see no cause of alarm on this head. We must strenuously

oppose having trade disputes and all business matters introduced into the meetings, our object being rather to create and foster a kindly feeling between employers and employed; to make the employed more intelligent and better workmen, and therefore of more service to those under whom they are engaged; it will then be a matter for congratulation to the owners of our large establishments that such an institution has been formed. To young men commencing an engineering life, this society offers very many inducements; they will be able to meet with men who have trodden the path before them, have seen and grappled with its difficulties, and who will be ever desirous to give them a helping hand, such timely assistance that may save them from repeating the blunders into which most young men fall. Were this its only object, this institution would not have been formed in vain. Hitherto little opportunity has been afforded for discussing engineering matters; indeed, no scientific journal exists here in which we can communicate our ideas. We boast of our large establishments employing scores of skilled men, and yet there is nothing to draw out the latent talent which it is presumed lies hidden among us. The community at large will be ultimately benefited by the indirect agency of our institution. How much capital has been literally thrown away in this colony on false theories? Some noodle, who would be an engineer, gains the ear of a capitalist, induces him to spend his money on some fallacious principle; failure, of course, is inevitable, disgust is engendered, and real talent receives a death-blow. Now, were a case of this kind brought under our notice, the thing would be thoroughly ventilated and at once exposed. It should, then, be the duty of this society to root out these charlatans—men who have not the slightest pretension to real mechanical knowledge. The time has arrived when invention should receive a stimulus. One is struck with alarm at the

small apparent vitality amongst us; we content ourselves to receive the inventions of other countries, while we as a body seem only capable of copying. It cannot be that we are less intelligent than our brethren at home. No. One cause is: we are not sufficiently organised; an invention coming from ourselves is not properly supported as it should be. Now, I trust we shall find that unity is strength, and should any good thing emanate from our members, we, as a body, shall give it our support; and I am sanguine enough to expect that many will have good cause for congratulation that they joined the Engineering Association of New South Wales. In speaking of invention, it has often struck one that there has been nothing characteristic of us as Australian; as I before stated, we are copyists. This of all communities, where labour is so high, wants labour-saving machines, and yet how little has been done in this direction. We might well take a lesson from the Americans. Here is, for instance, a simple machine as a wool-press, with its massive screws or racks, a machine quite unfitted to send up to the stations—heavy, cumbrous, difficult to repair. Now I imagine it is capable of great improvement. I merely refer to these matters to show that it will be more advantageous to this institution as well as to the community at large, if we confine our papers to the consideration of such objects as are more particularly adapted to the wants of the colony. In machinery for the cultivation of the land we are far behind, as was lamentably shown in our late Exhibition; in sugar manufacture there is a want for some cheap, simple and systematic kind of machinery especially adapted to local wants; and in gold machinery much has yet to be done to develop our auriferous deposits. A wide field for our discussion will be offered by the variety of constructions connected with railways and harbour works; and, providing no objection be raised in official quarters, these

works will furnish an ample supply of subjects for description and illustration. Some of our members are connected with the Public Works in some sphere or another, and will therefore be in a position to give valuable information\*not only of the works themselves, but on various points connected with the efficient and economical working and maintenance of the same, and contrasting them with similar undertakings in other countries. I trust I shall not be thought presumptuous if I sketch out the line in which I think our papers should tend, premising that it will be advisable as much as possible to shun abstract ideas; let us treat our papers in a clear, lucid and open manner, going straight to the point, and always keeping that in view, avoiding ambiguity, and then as long as we do this we shall be instructed. The first subject which I shall refer to is the supply of water to the goldfields and stations of the interior; this will afford material for many papers. It is of paramount importance, and I believe can be treated mechanically. Some of our members who have resided in the country can surely enlighten us on this topic. Then a paper on the best mode of constructing cheap and substantial tramways, either for locomotives or horse traction, with light rolling-stock especially adapted for the colony, would be invaluable at the present time, as there is some indication of tramways being carried out. Another subject well worthy of our attention is the construction of light-draught steamers for our bar harbours; papers on the treatment of native ores, especially ironstone and copper; the results of experiments on indigenous timbers, tabulated with the strengths and other properties compared with foreign timbers; the treatment of kerosene shales, the mode of getting out the same, and the manufac-

ture of oil therefrom—would, I am convinced, be most instructive. In conclusion, I have great pleasure in being able to congratulate the members on the prospects of this new institution. Let us only work together, let good feeling and harmony prevail, let us have plenty of papers to discuss, and I have no doubt but we shall at our annual meeting have a good report to lay before you.”

A vote of thanks was then given to Mr. Rose, after which the meeting separated.

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