

RESPONSE TO THE TOAST OF "THE INCOMING PRESIDENT". Legatee E. G. Baker.

"Sir Edmund Herring, Mr. Minister, Distinguished Guests, Legatee Blackwood and fellow Legatees:

Thank you, gentlemen, for the warm way in which you responded to the toast to "The Incoming President" and thank you George for your kind remarks.

Perhaps one of my first tasks as President should be to scotch a rumour that appears to be circulating within Melbourne Legacy. I can assure Legatees that it is not true that that small Branch of Melbourne Legacy just "north of the river" (I've even heard it called the "Premier Branch") - I'm referring to Heidelberg, of course - has a mortgage on supplying candidates for Melbourne Presidency.

Seriously, gentlemen, my feelings tonight are probably very similar to those of all 53 Past Presidents of this Club on similar occasions. I feel both proud and humble to follow men of such calibre. I have been privileged to know, and in some cases to work with, 32 Past Presidents of Melbourne Legacy during my few years in the organisation.

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the help given during the past few months in so many ways by so many people.

Jean and I are most grateful for the help and advice given by George and his wife Bernice since last September. They have made the job ahead appear to be within our capabilities.

It is said within Legacy that no Legatee goes it alone - and it is very true. Among those who give us help are our own immediate families. I acknowledge the understanding and help given to me by my wife, Jean, and my two daughters, Carolyn and Yvonne, not only in this venture, but during the whole of my Legacy involvement. I would couple with those three very important people our two sons-in-law, Chris and Greg, and thank them both for being part of this night with me.

To my employer, Frank Pearson, I publicly acknowledge his generosity in giving his blessing for me to take on this assignment. Frank is not only an ex-serviceman, but has been a most generous friend to Legacy over a number of years. Our Central Gippsland Group Legatees are very aware of this fact.

I will always be grateful to the two men who proposed and seconded me into Legacy: Legatee Jock McAuley and Ted Savage and both are here tonight; grateful because it has allowed me to be a part of this organisation and share the comradeship on which Legacy was founded. I believe this spirit of comradeship is very evident this evening when we see so many interstate and country Legatees joining their Melbourne comrades.

It is important also to remember all members of Melbourne Legacy House staff - the help and understanding for an incoming President has been tremendous.

What of the year ahead? I see the Melbourne Legacy year of 1976 being no less challenging than previous years. There is still a great need for Legacy's role in the community and I believe this role will continue to widen.

When one realizes that in the 14 years since 1961 we have seen the total number of Legacy widows throughout Australia rise from 36,000 to 81,000 in 1975, while the number of Junior Legatees under 21 has decreased only marginally from nearly 26,000 to a little over 23,000 in the same period.

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Obviously the problems of those we term our senior widows - these are widows of men who served in World War I, and we have some 5,000 in metropolitan Melbourne Legacy - must become an increasing part of the work-load of Melbourne Legatees.

In the Annual Report you can read details of what has been done over the past 12 months to provide flat accommodation for widows who can look after themselves. In previous years, Melbourne Legacy, in conjunction with other community organisations, has provided care and accommodation for some of our frail aged.

To provide this type of care for our widows, and to continue our help to our Junior Legatees, we will need the support of friends of Legacy for many years to come. To each of our guests here this evening, we thank you for what you have done for Legacy.

Gentlemen, may I conclude by saying how grateful I am to my fellow Legatees for the honour given me, and I accept with pride the Charter, Code and history of Legacy for safe keeping during the coming twelve months.

Thank you all".