

1966

COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTIAL YEAR - R.S. ISHERWOOD to G.H. COWAN.

I hope that the other material now included in this book will reduce the need to comment on every activity in which the President has been engaged during his year of office.

You will note from the minutes of the meeting of the Nominating Committee held on 23rd November, 1965 that several suggestions were made with a view to reducing the demands made on the President, allowing him more opportunity to stay closer with the activities of the Melbourne Club and easing the over-all responsibility. I don't propose to list the commitments I accepted, because I feel that any incoming President would feel bound to at least emulate the performance of his predecessor, and this is contrary to the advice tendered and recorded in the minutes to which I have referred. The advice is sound, but as the first President in office to receive such advice, I have not followed it completely in the belief that the breakdown in commitments has to be carried out over a period of years. I have endeavoured to accept commitments for tasks in order of priorities

(a) Melbourne Legacy, (b) Groups, (c) Clubs

In dealing with (a), I have attended important local meetings such as Annual Meetings and Dinners of Branches, Committees, Presentation Nights, and outside functions from which we are receiving or will receive benefit, social functions I accepted if I wanted to and with these I freely used Vice-Presidents and Past-Presidents through the President's Deputy to deputise.

In respect to (b), if I wanted to go and could conveniently do so I attended the Annual Meeting and Dinner. You will note I did not attend the meetings of three Groups. I suggest you might attend these three in your year if possible and in giving effect to the advice you have been given, that you visit only five others. In this way you can add your part in reducing the demands on our successors, and it is suggested you might mention in conversation with the local Legatees at the meetings you attend that this will be the pattern for Presidents' visits in the future.

This pattern has now been established in respect of (c). I would have liked to go to Mildura but I deliberately broke the pattern of the President being always present at their meeting. It would appear that you have to prepare the way for a similar break at Hamilton for 1968 and they could be advised, perhaps in November, that the incoming President will not be able to attend their meeting but he would like to send Legatee ..(a Past-President) perhaps) as his deputy.

As suggested by the minutes you might like to inform your Vice-Presidents of your policy in this matter and your expectations that they will accept a share of the responsibility. Some Presidents

have had an informal meeting with the new Board where views are freely exchanged on any subject.

I have visited all Girls' Classes and some of the Boys' Classes, the former is an easy one as they meet at Legacy House. I presented major prizes at the end of the year to all Girls' Classes including Speech Training, and arranged for deputies to present certificates to both Girls' and Boys' Classes.

The President's Calendar does not include all the functions to which you will receive invitations and the asterisk is not intended to indicate an obligation to attend.

A few specific comments -

You will find the standard of the meetings of Clubs, Groups, or Branches varies considerably.

Most Clubs have established a fairly high standard but there are a few which don't impress. Colac would be one, their <sup>approval</sup> ~~approval~~ to the Legacy responsibility seems a bit haphazard. Ararat is better but you can have some misgivings about their leadership, which from report should be better under the new President installed in November. The association between country Clubs and Melbourne is quite good, you will get constant reminders of their autonomy, but they are generally conscious of the larger responsibility of Melbourne and have a real admiration for the manner in which it handles this responsibility, which they don't often express. All of them help and support us in many ways, particularly with Residences. There is definite evidence of good liaison over the last two years with each Club having a Liaison officer appointed by Melbourne.

The Groups do a real Legacy job in their respective districts. They object to any form of regimentation and get the job done with a minimum of administrative arrangements. Use the Liaison Officer for anything you see and hear requires attention, don't start anything yourself. Some of the arrangements for their meetings lack co-ordination, but you can have an enjoyable evening at every one of them. I apparently caused a bit of a stir with a couple by advising that my wife would be accompanying me and asking was there a function for ladies. I know of one which was hurriedly arranged, as I found that quite a number of wives of Legatees in the Group had never met one another. This was at East Gippsland. The North Gippsland function for ladies appeared to be hurriedly arranged when it was realised that there were five in the party from Melbourne. The other function for ladies which was not very impressive was at Benalla, but I am informed that this was unusual.

I am not suggesting that the Groups should be forced into this

type of function, but I do feel that better Legacy work is done with the support of wives who know one another. Attendance by your wife is not anticipated at Groups close to Melbourne. Two Groups had caused some concern - Wangaratta which appeared to be insular and resisted efforts to get them to widen their outlook. Quite an improvement from quiet working by the Liaison Officer. Alexandra/Yea was the other, but signs of definite improvement; their problem is a contact responsibility which consists almost solely of elderly widows reflecting a lack of appreciation of real Legacy work.

Branches are directly under control of the Club and are carrying a full share of responsibility. I have asked Chairman of Branches Committee to stop this long list of introduction of Melbourne Legatees from outside the Branch at the Annual Dinners, and to examine the seating plan for guests to ensure they are not seated in a minor placing with Legatees occupying places at or adjacent to the head table. You might like to keep an eye on this. You will speak at all Group and Branch meetings and be invited to speak at most Club meetings.

At Group or Branch meetings you can be involved in an induction, installation of new Chairman, and a Legacy address. I kept my whisky well watered. Don't use a set Legacy address, they don't like it and will tell you where they heard it from you previously.

I have asked to see drafts of all annual reports of Branches, and had the Executive Officer check their accuracy before they are printed. Suggest you continue to do this, as these are part of the reports distributed by Melbourne Club for which you are responsible. Had a couple of minor "splats" but insisted on this procedure.

I have used Vice-Presidents for annual meetings of Branches and feel they can be used for Groups to instal chairmen in office. If there are any inductions to membership you have to deputize a Past-President.

The proposal of a toast "Legacy" has been discontinued at all Group and Branch meetings and while some of the proposals have been good the majority were very poor and embarrassed the President who usually had the task of responding to them. This toast is still proposed at the meetings of a few country Clubs.

One of the points I would stress is the adequacy of your briefings. I was embarrassed on a couple of occasions by having to adjust my approach to a task through lack of knowledge of the full purpose of my visit.

One of these occasions was at Warragul where I was asked to attend and present certificates and badges to 40-odd Junior Legatees and give an address on the Legacy badge. I did some real research

and prepared notes for a short address for children up to about the age of 12 years. The meeting was attended by the 40 children, plus about 100 or more mothers and all the Legatees in the Group. The address was not wide enough for such a mixed audience and I floundered around knowing what I had to say was not impressive on the whole audience. On reflection I felt that I should have been more perceptive. I calmed my own conscience by blaming the inadequacy of my briefing but refrained from making an issue of it with the Liaison Officer or members of the Group. My predecessor gave me one bit of advice on which I placed a high value - 'don't become personally involved'. You will become involved in many things as President, but try and avoid personal involvement. I only found it necessary to do so on one occasion when a Branch Chairman berated the Executive Officer for action which he knew was taken at my request.

I have made no attempt to attend a meeting of every committee, if I was in Legacy House when a meeting was being held and I had the time available I attended the meeting. Invariably I left it before it was finished. It was my experience that the Chairman felt he was obliged to ask your opinion and others might then refrain from giving theirs. If I was invited by the Chairman for a specific purpose or had a reason for attending the meeting I then felt obliged to fully participate. I sensed that the attendance of the President at committee meetings stifled discussion.

You might have the feeling from the manner in which Past-Presidents ensure their presence does not intrude on your year of office, that you have been abandoned. This is not so, and you will find that they can be very helpful, but you have to make the request.

The help of Ivan Layton is invaluable. He has a tremendous ability and capacity for work which can cause you some concern. He is devoted and dedicated to Legacy and this same attitude is reflected in all members of the Legacy staff "over and above the call of duty". Keep your ear to the ground for any need to protect him from the Legatees. I only found it necessary on the one occasion mentioned, but there were other occasions when I considered it desirable to inform him that I would take over a particular matter. He will suggest this course of action on occasions and he should be encouraged to do so. Ivan Layton's service to Legacy extends over many years during which he has established an extensive but close association over a wide field with people who accept him and are prepared to assist him to advance the cause he serves. You will find his knowledge will naturally assist you during your term of office.

CALENDAR - PRESIDENT, MELBOURNE LEGACY.

(Items marked + are normally attended by the President)

- FEBRUARY - Seek opportunity to meet Advisory, Tradition & History Committee.  
Club picnic at Emerald Country Club
- MARCH - + Attend meetings of Anzac Observance Committee  
+ Annual Meeting of Club and Junior Legacy  
+ Annual Dinner of Club and installation of President  
+ Group Conference  
+ Meeting of Presidents of Legacy Clubs of Victoria  
+ Rosanna Golf Club - attendance, no duties  
+ Anzac Commemoration Council at Anzac House  
+ First meeting of Board of Management  
+ First meeting of Junior Legacy Committee  
+ First meeting of Legacy Wives' Association  
Hamilton Club Annual Meeting and Dinner  
Davey's Bay Yacht Club - outing for Junior Legatees  
+ Preston/Northcote Branch Annual Meeting  
Bowls Match Carry-on- Legacy  
Canberra Club Annual Meeting and Dinner  
Junior Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting  
Swimming Sports - usually Richmond Baths  
Power House Fete  
Seymour Group of Shepparton -Annual Meeting and Dinner  
March-April  
Operation Firewood  
Garden Week - staffed by ILC ladies
- APRIL - + Sub-committee meetings on State Conference  
+ Box Hill Annual Meeting and Dinner  
+ Rehearsal at Shrine, meetings with Anzac Observance C'tee  
+ School Children's Service of Remembrance at Shrine  
+ Legatees' Pilgrimage to Shrine  
+ Anzac Day Service at Shrine  
+ "Stanhope" Reunion  
+ Lord Mayor's Command Performance -Portico Room Mch/April  
+ Anzac Eve Comradeship  
+ Anzac Day Luncheon  
+ President's visits to Residences - spread over short period  
Benalla Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner  
+ Official visits, Governor, Premier, Lord Mayor  
Annual Memorial Service Sir John Monash at his Memorial

- MAY
- + Normally a week-end camp at Somers
  - Apprenticeship Presentation night - Melbourne Town Hall
  - Stan Savige Pilgrimage - Kew Cemetery
  - + Blinded Soldiers' Asscn - Dinner at Victoria - now, or later.
  - Numurkah/Nathalia Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - Shepparton Club's Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - Latrobe Valley Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - + Government House "At Home"
  - + Luncheon with Press at Athenaeum Club
  - + Greyhound Racing - receive cheque

- JUNE
- Blinded Soldiers' Bowling Club Dinner - Legacy House
  - Rotary Youth Week luncheon
  - + Legacy Wives - Market Fair - Malvern Town Hall
  - Mildura Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - + Carry On Luncheon - no duties
  - + "Harelands" Children's Birthday Party - one also held Nov.
  - + Government House - Queen's Birthday reception
  - + Clay Bird Shoot at Laverton
  - + State Conference and evening dinner
  - + State Conference of N.S.W. Clubs in Sydney) - late June
  - + Annual Meeting and Dinner Sydney Club } early July

- JULY
- + Lord Mayor's Ball
  - R.S.L. State Conference - in attendance - no duties
  - Berger's Ball
  - + I.L.C. (Ladies) Fete Melbourne Town Hall
  - Geelong Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - Yarra Valley Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner
  - Ballaarat Annual Meeting and Dinner

- AUGUST - + Federal Conference - discussions with sub-committee and some preparation
- + Legacy Week arrangements - opening Luncheon last Monday in month
- + Junior Legacy Mothers' Club fete at Legacy House
- + World War 1 - Legatees' gathering at Naval & Military Club.
- + Father's Day Council - attend and receive cheque
- Albury Club's Annual Meeting and Dinner
- Bendigo " " " "
- Essendon Branch " " "
- Wangaratta Group's " "
- Williamstown Branch " "
- + Speech Training Demonstration

- SEPTEMBER - + BADGE DAY - First Friday in month
- Colac's Annual Meeting and Dinner
- Footscray Branch's Annual Meeting and Dinner
- Lord Mayor's Fund Annual Meeting
- + Meeting of Presidents of Clubs in Victoria on Federal Conference
- + Demonstration rehearsals
- R.S.L. State Ball
- Repatriation Hospital - Nurses' graduation
- Basketball finals
- Thirtyniners' Annual Dinner
- Commemoration Day - Tuesday Luncheon

- OCTOBER - + Federal Conference
- + Legacy Wives' Card Party - Kew Town Hall
- + Demonstration - Melbourne Town Hall
- + Huntingdale Associates' Day
- Cobram Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner
- Dandenong Group's " " "
- Heidelberg Branch's " "
- North Gippsland Group's " "
- South Gippsland Group's " "
- East Gippsland Group's " "
- Warrnambool Club's " "
- + Meeting of Nominating Committee for President

- NOVEMBER - + Huntingdale Golf Day  
+ Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen - service at 2 p.m. dinner (with wife) 7 p.m.  
+ Lord Mayor's Dinner  
+ Education Dept. Handover of toys  
+ Carry On Annual Dinner  
+ Senior Widows' Fete - Legacy House  
Ararat Club's Annual Meeting and Dinner  
+ Limbless Soldiers' Association - Annual Dinner  
Peninsula Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner  
Wimmera Club's " " "  
+ Greyhound Racing meeting
- DECEMBER - + Mothers' Club Christmas Party - Legacy House  
+ Junior & Intermediate Girls Xmas Party and presentation of awards  
+ Senior Girls - dance and presentation of awards  
+ Residences Christmas parties  
+ Legatees' Christmas Party - Legacy House  
+ Legacy staff Christmas Party  
+ Children's Party - Government House  
+ Senior Widows' Concert - Melbourne Town Hall  
+ Boys' Classes Sports - Scotch College Oval  
Preston Motors - picnic and receive cheque  
+ Southern Command Officers' Wives' Assocn.- morning tea and receive cheque.  
+ Southern Command Cocktail Party
- JANUARY - Camps and Holidays  
visits to Residences, Lord Somers' Camp,  
Education Dept. Camp.
- FEBRUARY - + State Conference - South Australia  
+ Adelaide Club's Annual Meeting and Dinner  
Alexandra/Yea Group's Annual Meeting and Dinner  
Central Gippsland Group's " " "  
Oakleigh Branch's " " "  
Swimming Sports - usually Richmond Baths  
+ Finals - Legacy Bowls Competition  
+ Operation Float