

## PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT

### Annual Hand-over of Documents

### Selection of Incoming President

In Blatchford's "Legacy" on page 28 he made passing reference to a matter which was of far more vital concern to the future of the movement than the published words indicate. All he said in telling his history of Melbourne Legacy at the commencement of its third year (1925-6) when Legatee T.W. White became President, was - "This was the only year in the history of the club when the necessity arose for an election for the office of President ... " Then on page 28 he added "In the first few months of the year, there was a crop of resignations among the officers of the Club ... " He might well have added - "and many resignations from Club membership following the bitterness of the Presidential election".

This unfortunate experience remained uppermost in the minds of the club's early administrators who took every possible precaution and successfully avoided further Presidential elections.

In the year 1932-3, the matter was brought forward for reconsideration and eventually a policy for the future selection of the Club President was evolved and incorporated in the rules.

The Club rule reads -

20. "Election of ... Office-Bearers:

- (a) ...
- (b) ...
- (c) Each year one member shall be nominated as follows for the office of President the next year. A conference of the retiring President and those of his predecessors who have held office during the previous six years shall be convened by the retiring President before the 31st day of December in each year and at such conference at which four shall be a quorum, a nomination shall be approved for the office of President for the ensuing year for submission to the members. The name of the member so nominated hereinafter called the Nominated President shall be promulgated to members at the earliest opportunity and be published in the "Weekly Bulletin" not later than the 31st day of January next ensuing, but such nomination shall not in any way preclude the nomination of other members for the office of President."

It is worthy of note that ever since this rule was instituted there has not been one objection to the selection made by the ex-Presidents. Consequently, Melbourne has been most fortunate in its Presidents and the tradition of early days, that the President shall be more than a mouthpiece and nominal head, but shall be a sort of supreme ruler, has been effectively sustained.

It is also worthy of note that several other clubs have followed Melbourne's lead, and have arranged their Presidential selections either in strict accordance or very similarly.

It is, however, necessary to emphasise that the Club Rule was expressly worded to ensure that the nominee of the ex-Presidents is kept absolutely secret until announced directly to the members by the current President. The Advisory, Tradition and History Committee strongly urges that this interpretation of the rule be strictly adhered to - not even members of the Board of Management should be given even a hint until all members are simultaneously advised. The Committee is convinced that the slightest departure from this policy could create personal embarrassments and other difficulties.

18th November, 1966

The above memorandum is not dated and while the procedure laid down in the rules is correctly quoted, the practice which has apparently always been followed is for the meeting of the nominating committee to be convened and chaired by the most senior of the Past Presidents who would be the retiring member of the committee. This ensures that the Past President with the most experience as a member of the nominating committee is in charge of the procedures.

In accepting the responsibilities attached to the unique position of the President as set out in the paragraph which follows the quotation from the rules, those who have held the office in the last ten or more years have elected to disregard the advice contained in the final paragraph in relation to informing the members of the Board of the nomination which is then announced to the members of the Club.

R.S. Isherwood

February 1992

The announcement of the nomination for President is normally made at the Tuesday luncheon immediately following its advice to the Board of Management. There is no set form for the announcement and the following is suggested as suitable to the occasion:-

President

"I have to make an important announcement of real interest to all Legatees.

The nominating committee of the President and past Presidents of the Club have met and agreed on a nomination for next year's President and I invite you to join in extending congratulations to the Nominated President for next year who is Legatee Stan Savige".

Any acknowledgement of the reception of Legatees to the announcement should be very brief and is invariably confined to an expression of appreciation and thanks.

February 1992

R | R. S. ISHERWOOD