PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS.

To THE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE VICTORIAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN—

In making the First Annual Report of the Victorian Engineers Association, I think I am justified in premising my remarks by stating that I believe no other Association ever yet established in the colonies has, in so short a period, taken so prominent a position in the country.

As you are aware, the initiatory steps for the formation of the Association were taken by the Exhibition Trustees, at the suggestion of the Hon. Graham Berry, towards the end of July last, and a number of gentlemen having met by invitation it was determined to form an Association embracing members of all the engineering professions and trades.

A Provisional Committee was formed, and set of Rules and Regulations drafted for the governance of the Society; office-bearers were duly elected, and it was then decided that the inauguration of the Society should be celebrated by a Conversazione and Industrial Exhibition.

On application being made to the Exhibition Trustees, they very kindly granted the use of the eastern annexe, free of charge. The thanks of the Association are also due to the Hon. the
Minister of Railways, who gave the concession of free transit of exhibits over the Victorian Railways; to the Hon. the Minister of Defence, who has exhibited a splendid and interesting collection of military and naval weapons. The necessary steps were taken to obtain exhibits, and on 21st December (less than five months after the formation of the Society,) the Exhibition was opened in the presence of a distinguished assemblage by the Hon. L. L. Smith, Chairman of the Exhibition Trust.

You are all aware what a great success the Exhibition has been, although perhaps the monetary returns have not quite equalled the anticipations formed; but the Association has had the honour of conducting the undertaking to a most successful termination, and can take credit for having diffused a great amount of useful knowledge amongst a very large section of the public, and I have no doubt but that with the experience gained in this our first attempt, on some future occasion the Association will be in a far better position to make an Exhibition even a greater success than this has been.

Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the members of the Executive Committee and of the Council for the arduous manner in which they have continuously laboured in the interests of the Association, supervising the details of management and endeavouring by every means in their power to interest the visitors to the Exhibition.

The Committee have been most ably seconded in their efforts by Mr. R. S. Pryce, who was appointed Secretary and Manager to the Exhibition when the project had been decided on, and his experience and constant attention have in a very large measure tended towards the successful result of the undertaking.

With regard to the work of the Association outside the holding of the Exhibition, it will naturally be understood that the time of the members has been too much taken up to allow of a great devotion to the discussion of subjects which will come under the purview of the Association. A commencement has, how-
ever, been made in the reading of papers, Mr. R. H. Shakespear and Mr. F. C. Christy having been the first gentlemen to come forward in this matter; and I trust that in the coming year each meeting will be characterised by the discussion of some subject interesting to the engineering trades and professions, as no other course of procedure will tend so much to a diffusion of knowledge on intricate subjects as their discussion by a society such as ours, embracing as it does, gentlemen of prominent standing in the various branches of engineering.

I may mention that, up to the present time, we have upwards of 100 subscribing members, and I would urge on all the necessity of using every endeavour to swell the ranks of the Association; and it is to be hoped that before our next Annual Meeting we shall have double the number of Members that we have at the present day.

I cannot close this report without referring, in the most complimentary terms, to the very valuable services which have been gratuitously rendered by Mr. James Sherrard, the Honorary Secretary to the Association. That gentleman has been most unremitting in his attention to our interests, and has rendered the most valuable services; nothing has been too much for him to grapple with, and the way in which he has devoted his best energies at all times to carry out—indeed, to anticipate—our wishes is beyond all praise. Our best thanks are due to him, and I trust, at some future time, we may be able to express our appreciation of his services in a more substantial manner.

ROBT. WATSON, President.

20th February, 1884.
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