

NOTES FROM "A BOOKMAN'S DIARY"

FUGITIVE COMMENTS ON PAST MEETINGS OF "THE FRIENDS"

By P. A. Lawlor

Some forty years ago I commenced to keep a diary in real earnest. In it I made notes of many of the interesting people coming my way, of events at home and abroad, occasional meanderings in thought, but mostly of my adventurings in Bookland. These diaries are now approaching the quarter of a million words stage, so that I deemed it wise recently to make a rough index of the typewritten pages. This index has enabled me to extract from the whole those references to the Turnbull Library and of "The Friends" that may be of interest in the 21st Birthday issue of "The Record".

The first entry concerns a letter I received from Mr. Clyde Taylor, dated May 4th, 1939, in which he set out his plans for the proposed establishment of an organisation to be known as The Friends of the Turnbull Library. Naturally I accepted his invitation to attend the meeting planned. It must have been a busy day, judging from the inadequate note I made as follows:

May 16th, 1939.—So once more I am an hon. sec.! This came my way at a meeting held at the Turnbull Library today to form the "Friends" group, the scheme for which was outlined to me by Clyde Taylor a few days ago. Most of the book enthusiasts of the city were there. Why do booklovers look so sad — morose even? They should be the happiest people in the world. Naturally Clyde Taylor looked apprehensive but much less so when the meeting achieved its object. Johannes Andersen, though, was almost scowling; A. E. Currie, aggressive as though somebody had split an infinitive; Prof. Shelley with fierce challenging eye; Herbert Baillie, weary and old; V. R. Gunn as though every one present had borrowed a book from him; and Alan Mulgan as though he had missed his last bus to York Bay. Bert Ilott looked as alert as usual, though, and Archie Treadwell dared to display his customary good humour. However, the main thing was that all present were enthusiastic, particularly when glowing messages of approval were read from Sir Robert Anderson, Leigh Hunt, Tom Seddon, Guy Morris and others. A strong executive augers well for the future particularly with Ilott as president and Graham Bagnall my right hand man as secretary and treasurer. Good things must come of this meeting.