

Obituary Notice

Wilfrid Hugh Hudspeth

Wilfrid Hugh Hudspeth, Vice-President of the Royal Society of Tasmania, who died suddenly on April 1st, 1952, had been a member since 1935 and for most of that period a member of its Council. He had served too for a number of years, as one of the Society's nominees on the Board of Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum and as its wise and impartial Chairman during several difficult periods. Hudspeth was the fourth son of the Rev. Canon F. H. Hudspeth and Lucy Mills *nee* Cogle, both of whom came from the Jericho Valley—his father from "Bowsden", the original grant to his family, and his mother from nearby "Huntworth". From the Hutchins School he entered Trinity College, Melbourne, and graduated B.A. in 1895.

Having decided to adopt the law as his profession, Hudspeth, after serving his articles with Messrs. J. B. Walker and W. Wolfhagen, was admitted to the Supreme Court of Tasmania as Barrister and Solicitor, and was for a short period in the Solicitor-General's Department before joining the firm of Lewis and Gant, with which he remained until his retirement. This took place in 1935 and in the same year he joined the Royal Society of Tasmania. Hudspeth found a deep interest in its work and it was soon evident that his knowledge of Tasmania and its history was of unusual scope and accuracy. As a result, contributions, offered in the first place with his usual diffidence as lectures, came to be sought as fully documented papers for publication in the Proceedings of the Society. To be present at one of his addresses was a delight both for the interest of its matter and the manner of its presentation. He could be assured always of a full and appreciative audience. His help came to be more and more sought by those of similar interests in this and other States of the Commonwealth. In return he gave freely and unselfishly of his knowledge. An intimate personal relationship with the descendants of early colonists and his wide correspondence afforded him access to many early manuscripts and records in their possession. As a result the Library of the Royal Society has been enriched by the presentation of a number of such manuscripts or true copies of them typed by himself. In this manner for nearly two decades he worked at the State Archives, the Libraries and at home, preparing, typing and cataloguing. Indeed his retirement became, perhaps, the most interesting and exacting period of his life. It is good to know that much of his specialized knowledge will not be lost.

Apart from his published work he had with unusual care collated, prepared and filed historical data so that it would be available for consultation and the use of students. This very valuable collection has, by the

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generosity of his son Mr. John Hudspeth, of Mt. Leslie, been placed in the Library of the Society. In his Will, with a monetary legacy, Mr. Hudspeth bequeathed to the Royal Society the diaries of his great-grandfather, Thomas Hudspeth, and the diaries and letterbook of John Maule Hudspeth, his grandfather.

To conclude, it would have embarrassed him beyond measure had mention been made of those delightful personal qualities so well-known to his friends. We may, however, deplore the loss of a wise historian and counsellor and one who, given the opportunity, would have been a great archivist and librarian.