

PROFESSOR IAN SMITH - FRENCH

(not very good tape - another talk out-the-window)

Came 1957 as Professor of Modern Languages (though now is Prof. of French).

Succeeded Prof. Triebel who arrived in 1932 (?) - upgraded to Chair in early 1940s.

Himself a French scholar; not much German.

A Melbourne graduate; doctorate in Paris; lectureship in Melbourne; came somewhat reluctantly to Hobart "the ends of the earth", seeing it as temporary and an escape from "dynastic struggles" in Melbourne.

I came to a place where you could know all your colleagues; (though derelict buildings).

A period of curious calm, though there was still a lot of bitterness over the Royal Commission.

Was the ORR case clear-cut, in your opinion, when you arrived?

Was the University Council out to "get" not only Orr but the people who were on Orr's side? [see Polya, e.g.].

Answer: no, not really ... The Council was vindictive towards Orr.

Was promotion given to people who had been on the Council's side?

Were they rewarded?

A: This is probably not so.

100

Himself often served on Promotions Committee - feels that everybody got a fair go.

The mistake of the University in not paying his fare back to Ireland; plus some pocket money.

Orr went to various people asking for money - "but he never came to me".

A large meeting of staff in the old Engineering theatre at the Domain, addressed by Isles. The young lecturers in Law were convinced there had been a miscarriage of justice and got up and attacked Isles, who had come in hoping to reconcile - "Isles is a man I feel very sorry for - an impossible situation, no-win".

Isles at this meeting lost his temper with the lawyers and threatened them with not getting promotion. Most of them resigned "as a grand gesture".

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455 Early sixties. The development of comprehensive high schools - the abandonment of the old selective high schools - tremendous pressure to scrap the language requirement for matriculation. It went about 1969. Languages pushed out of the core curriculum when this social science rubbish came in.

After this we declined. We lose talented people - brilliant men no longer do a language at the H.S.C. Not a highly-rewarded profession. Now - small numbers - uneconomic - quite gravely threatened.

550 Attack on social sciences. - And an elite now who are linguistically unequipped.

End Side 1

The University in the seventies.

In sixties "I spent far too much time on univ. politics, not on scholarships. After an operation in 1970 I withdrew from politics, reverting to scholarship. "I spent far too much time on university politics ..."

Centre of University shifted to where the student numbers were.

020 "You had to be political". You had to try to apply proper standards in appointments and promotions because the reputation of the University was poor.

035 "They tried to get round the difficulties of salary increases by promoting people" (in the fifties).

045 Malcolm McRae - a fascinating person, Mac Urquhart - fascinating, and a lovely man "tremendous intellectual curiosity".

Gerald Firth a character too - in the end a victim of the young Turks of Economics - driven out - a humanist - replaced by hardline mathematical models.

Pitman a hard man, not much human warmth, but remarkable administrator as well as mathematician. He pulled the University together in 1960-61 when it was a total mess - came in as Chairman of Board and laid down strict rules of correct behaviour - restored morale.

PROFESSOR IAN SMITH - FRENCH (contd.)

- 100 Role of Vice-Chancellors.
Not seen as particularly significant in moulding universities.
- 110-140 The Isles tragedy.
- 135 Social gatherings of whole university staff and Council members.
- 140 Cartland - an administrator - (which Isles was not).
- 155 Caro, like Isles, an academic and "would sit down with anyone" (unlike Cartland).
- 170 But terribly impulsive and would never take advice. Made bad errors.
- 180 (what?) (1) should have struck a much harder bargain with Mt Nelson
(2) Livemore affair (3) The Appeal.
- 230 Following the trend. The Department of Sociology.
- 240 Would scrap the Centre for Education if given the chance. Ruminations about teacher-training.
- 275 English vocabulary of students of these times is appalling.
High cost of staff salaries - has gone up from 70% in 1970 to 81% now.
Fears range of disciplines will contract because of this.

End Side 2