

VISCOUNT DUNWICH, R.N.
COMING-OF-AGE CELEBRATION AT HENHAM
PRESENTATION FROM ESTATE EMPLOYEES.



The celebration of the coming-of-age of Viscount Dunwich, R.N., son and heir of the Earl of Stradbroke, took place at the ancestral home, Henham Hall, on Saturday afternoon. The function was somewhat belated, Lord Dunwich having attained his majority in April, 1921, owing to the absence of his father from England as Governor of Victoria, Australia, and also to the young Viscount's service abroad in the Navy. Nevertheless, the rejoicings at this auspicious event were none the less hearty, because of the postponement, the only disappointing feature being the extremely wet weather. Lord Stradbroke entertained nearly two hundred and fifty of the employes on the seven farms on his estate, together with their wives, at a bountiful spread of good old-English fare, served in a large marquee in the park, facing the Hall. The tables were most tastefully arranged, and decorated with flowers (helianthus riverton gen), while the central posts of the marquee were entwined with the same flower, intermingled with prunus purpurea foliage.

Lord Stradbroke presided, and was supported at the head table by the Countess of Stradbroke, Viscount Dunwich, Lady Charlotte Rous, Mr. W. C. Mitchell (agent), and Mr. E. C. Wilson (estate office). At the conclusion of the repast, packets of tobacco and cigarettes were distributed among the male guests.

Lord Stradbroke proposed the health of "The King" in felicitous terms, expressing the hope that the toast would long continue to be honoured.

Mr. Mitchell, in submitting the toast of "Lord and Lady Stradbroke," remarked that it was a great honour and pleasure to him to do so. It was not often that such a large gathering of employes on the estate could be mustered together to enjoy his Lordship's hospitality. It was very kind of his Lordship to entertain them, and they appreciated it very much. (Loud applause.) They were very glad to see Lady Stradbroke had sufficiently recovered to be present with them, and hoped that she would soon be restored to her usual health and strength. (Applause.) Continuing, Mr. Mitchell said that during the last few years they had been going through very anxious times in agriculture, and particularly so both for his Lordship and those of them who had the privilege of organising the work. They hoped, however, for better times in the future. (Hear, hear.) They were singularly fortunate in having an employer like Lord Stradbroke, who had their welfare at heart, and on their part it was their duty to do the best for him. "I think you already know," said Mr. Mitchell, addressing Lord Stradbroke, "how much both you and her Ladyship are looked up to by your employes, and not only by them but throughout the county." (Loud applause.) Proceeding, Mr. Mitchell said he wished to take that opportunity to congratulate Lady Stradbroke on the recent honour bestowed upon her by His Majesty for the good work she did in Australia, when her husband was Governor of Victoria. (Applause.) He also offered the congratulations of all present to Lord Dunwich on his coming-of-age. They knew how proud his parents must be of him, and it must be, he thought, a great joy to them to see him taking his place in the Navy of the British Empire. (Loud applause.) In conclusion, he said they all sincerely trusted that both Lord and Lady Stradbroke would be long spared to reside amongst them at Henham. (Applause.)

Lord Stradbroke, who met with an enthusiastic reception on rising to reply, warmly thanked the company for the splendid reception given to the toast. He assured them that he and Lady Stradbroke greatly appreciated that demonstration of the good feeling existing between them. Indeed, they appreciated it more than anything else in the world. (Applause.) A gathering like that one reminded him of the old harvest homes held years ago, but which, unfortunately, had lapsed in later years, for what reason he could not say. There were, however, people going about the country trying to stir up trouble between masters and employes. He had done as much as he could to counteract anything of that sort, and thought a meeting like that one, brought out the best feelings from their hearts. (Applause.) His Lordship went on to emphasise how necessary it was, in the difficult times agriculture and other industries were experiencing, that there should be a mutual determination existing between employer and employed to work for each other's welfare, pointing out that if they pooled together their industries were much more likely to improve and prosper. (Applause.) In these times they could not stand still. This reminded him of the man who had two clocks. One was an old grandfather, whose "tick-tock" seemed to say: "Take your time; take your time," while the little American clock on the mantel-shelf seemed to say, "Keep-a-going; keep-a-going." (Laughter and applause.) What was wanted, he contended, was continuity, and not change, in the system of ownership, tenancy and employment, and he expressed the hope that when the time came he would carry on that estate, and that Henham would continue to be the home of the Rous family in the future, as it had been in the past. (Applause.) It was to him a great pleasure to find that his son took the greatest interest in agriculture and the upkeep of the estate, although his services in the Navy precluded him from having much time at his disposal at Henham. He (Lord Stradbroke) remembered 44 years ago, when his own coming-of-age was celebrated, that his father spoke very kindly of him, saying that he had never caused him any anxiety whatever. It was now a great pleasure (said Lord Stradbroke) that both he and Lady Stradbroke could say the same thing of their son. (Loud applause.) They hoped he would have a successful career in the Navy. One of the reasons for choosing that as a profession was that it was a calling which would give a young man a good insight into life, which he would not get by living at home, and the training he received would be of great assistance to him in future life. His son's senior officer told him (Lord Stradbroke)

that his son was getting on capitally, adding: "What we like about him is that we can always rely upon him." (Loud applause.) In conclusion, Lord Stradbroke warmly acknowledged the unity of feeling and affection shown towards them in that happy gathering. (Loud applause.)

Lady Stradbroke, referring to the terrible climatic conditions of the day, said that she thought the fault should be laid upon her, because the celebration was fixed for last August, when her son was on leave, but it was postponed for the reason that she was ill in bed at the time. Her Ladyship also remarked that they had been saying some very nice things about them, and she would like to say what she thought, and that was, "Father and son are very much alike." (Loud laughter and applause.)

Mr. A. Wythe (steward) proposed the health of Lord Dunwich, observing that they had not had an opportunity before of telling him how much he was loved by the employes. (Applause.) As a small token of affection and the very high esteem in which he was held by the employes, they asked him to accept from them a silver inkstand.

Mr. Smith (baillif, Valley Farm) then presented Lord Dunwich with a very chaste designed silver inkstand. Between the two ink-bottles is a receptacle for stamps, the lid of which is surmounted by a miniature effigy of an admiral. In the course of a short speech, Mr. Smith, alluding to Lord Dunwich, said, "We are proud of him. Lord Stradbroke is one of the best masters in the county, and in Lord Dunwich we shall have a good successor." (Loud applause.)

Messrs. A. Lincoln (Lyon's Farm), C. Ellis (Union Farm), J. Clarke (Manor Farm), R. Thompson (head carpenter), and W. Haggart (head gardener) each added a few words testifying to the esteem in which Lord Stradbroke was held by the employes as an excellent master.

The toast having been received with musical honours.

Lord Dunwich, in reply, expressed his gratitude for the very nice present, which he said, he greatly appreciated, and also for the very kind thoughts which had prompted them to make it. Continuing, he said that, of course, he could not pretend that the gift was a complete surprise, because they very kindly asked him to choose his own present, and he had chosen something which he could always have by him. A similar present was given to his father by the Henham Estate employes in 1885, when he attained his majority, and he used it every day still. Lord Dunwich went on to say that it gave him very great pleasure to be able to come among them from time to time—(applause)—although he was afraid that of necessity, his visits were short and infrequent. However, that could not be helped. The Navy, for the time being, at least, was his job, and he was sure that they would not wish any son of Lord Stradbroke to undertake a job and then only carry it through in a half-hearted manner. (Hear, hear.) His father, as they knew, never undertook anything unless he intended to carry it through, and he was sure that they did not want him to choose anyone, rather than his father, as his example of how to conduct himself in the affairs of life. (Applause.) His father had mentioned that he hoped that Henham would continue to be the home of the Rous family in the future, as it had been in the past. Of course, to each one of them there was no place like one's home, but he was sure there was no home which meant quite so much to anyone as did Henham to him. His ancestors had lived in that part of the country for now nearly 900 years, and what was born and bred in the blood could not possibly be stamped out by ten, twenty, or even fifty years of foreign surroundings. They might rest assured that, although he might spend a few years of his life abroad, there would never be but one place which really meant home to him, and that place, he need hardly say, was Henham. (Loud applause.) He could promise them that when he did eventually come to live there he would endeavour, to the utmost of his capacity, to carry on everything as it was now—(applause)—in spite of trade setbacks and agricultural depressions. In fact, he hoped to be a strong link in a strong chain of members of the Rous family, which had lived, and were living, and would continue to live, at Henham. (Renewed applause.) He quite realised that things were not now quite the same as they used to be in the old days, but he did feel that what they had all lost in worldly wealth had been more than made up for in the closer, more personal, and more sympathetic relations which now existed between landlord and tenant and between master and man. (Loud applause.) That was why he particularly valued the very nice inkstand they had given him. He should value it very much for its utility and beauty, and he hoped to have it always with him in whatever part of the world he went, as a token of those two most valuable of all sentiments—friendship and good will, which he felt existed between all present. (Prolonged applause.)

Lord Stradbroke, in proposing the health of Mr. Mitchell, his agent, and the working heads of the estate, having observed that the post of agent was not an easy one—to act between master and employe—warmly acknowledged his indebtedness to him and the other heads of departments for their good and thoroughly honest work, and their desire to equally consider the interests of employer and employed.

Mr. Mitchell, in reply, assured them that during his fourteen years he had been connected with the estate, although there had been trying times, his work had been a great pleasure to him. Had it not been for the harmonious assistance from the heads of the various departments, it would have been impossible for him to have carried on the work as it had been while Lord Stradbroke was engaged on Army service during the war, and his subsequent absence in Australia. (Applause.)

Mr. Stanley Bell, Bickley (Kent), the well-known variety entertainer, afterwards gave a performance, which was immensely enjoyed. The Wrentham Band rendered some capital selections of music at intervals, and the proceedings terminated with rousing cheers for Lord and Lady Stradbroke, Lord Dunwich, and Lady Charlotte Stoss.

The evening was admirably carried out by Mr. and Mrs. J. Hill, baker and confectioners, Wainford.