

INSTITUTE OF MARINE ENGINEERS
INCORPORATED.

SESSION



1913-14.

President: THOMAS L. DEVITT, Esq.

VOLUME XXV.

Laying of the Foundation Stone of the New
City Premises, Tower Hill, London, E.C.

BY THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON
(SIR DAVID BURNETT, BART.)

On Wednesday, October 29, 1913.

THE foundation stone of the new premises of the Institute on Tower Hill was laid by the Lord Mayor of London (Sir David Burnett, Bart.), who attended, accompanied by the Sheriffs in State, on Wednesday, October 29th, 1913.

Before the ceremony a luncheon was held at the offices of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, at which Mr. Thomas L. Devitt (President of the Institute) presided, the party including the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Lieut.-Col. John Humphrey, Mr. Deputy and Sheriff F. G. Painter, The Right Hon. Lord Inchcape, G.C.M.G., etc. (Past President), the Right Hon. Lord Pirrie, K.P., P.C. (Past President), Sir Archibald Denny, Bart., LL.D., Sir David Gill, K.C.B. (Past President), Mr. Summers Hunter (Past President), Mr. James Denny (Past President), Alderman Sir Ed-

ward E. Cooper, Sir Frederic Bolton, Sir Alfred L. Bower, Mr. F. Shadforth Watts, Mr. William Lund, Mr. Charles W. Gordon, Colonel T. J. Kearns, C.B., Lieut.-Col. C. J. Ker-Fox, Captain A. E. Wood, Mr. Joseph Hallett (Chairman of Council), Mr. Jas. Adamson (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Robt. Leslie, R.N.R. (Chairman of the City Premises Committee), Mr. Alex. H. Mather (Hon. Secretary, City Premises Committee), Mr. James Weir (Vice-President), Mr. Alexr. Boyle (Vice-President), Mr. James T. Milton (Vice-President), Mr. J. H. Rosenthal (Vice-President), Mr. George Adams (Member of Council), Mr. John Clark (Member of Council), Mr. William E. Archer (Hon. Solicitor), Mr. Victor Wilkins (Architect), Commander W. Montanaro, R.N., Mr. C. Buchanan, Mr. E. C. Champness, Mr. H. J. Cornish, Mr. C. Fowling, Mr. J. Howden Hume, Mr. F. A. Mayne, Mr. Newman Mumford, Mr. Thomas Putnam, Mr. F. W. Rawlinson, F.R.G.S., Mr. C. F. Redman, Mr. H. Ruck-Keene, and Mr. James H. Warrack. In addition to the above, about 200 members and friends assembled to view the ceremony. By the kindness of the Chairman and Governors of the Royal Merchant Seamen's Orphanage, 100 of the boys and girls of that Institution attended, with their band, to form a guard of honour.

Mr. T. L. DEVITT, in extending a very hearty welcome to the Lord Mayor, said the Institute had been so useful in the past that he was quite sure it would be useful in the future. It was formed twenty-five years ago, and now it had a membership of between 1,400 and 1,500. Its members were connected with marine engineering all over the world. Some of the most distinguished engineers belonged to it. The work of the Institute was most productive of usefulness to their own profession and to shipping in general. He was very proud to be connected with the Institute, and he could assure them in the name of shipowners that they fully acknowledged the valuable work done by the engineers of this country for them and their business. The development of engineering had been wonderful. It was his duty that day to welcome the Lord Mayor, and in doing so he would say that it was very seldom they got a building of this sort erected in the City of London in these days. The Institute of Marine Engineers had come to remain. It had come to stay, and he hoped that where they were then standing would be a centre of usefulness for marine engineers for generations to come. They had with them that day some of the boys and girls from the Royal Merchant Seamen's

Orphanage at Snaresbrook, and he trusted that the Lord Mayor, when his leisure came would be able to come down and see them at Snaresbrook.

The LORD MAYOR said he was very grateful for Mr. Devitt's kind words of welcome. If in the few words which he proposed to utter he should encroach upon the speech of Mr. James Denny he would make to him the usual poacher's apology. It afforded him the greatest possible pleasure, as Lord Mayor, to be present that day, on that very interesting and important occasion, the laying of the foundation stone of the new home of the Institute of Marine Engineers, a society representing a very important industry closely connected with the commercial prosperity of the City of London. It was very appropriate, therefore, that this new home should be within the City. They were adding one more source of strength to the grand old City. The Institute was the representative body of a great profession. It was founded in 1888, and received its charter of incorporation the following year. Its foundation was very much on the lines of the old livery guilds of the City of London of centuries ago. Its aim was to maintain and promote the status of the marine engineer, and to promote engineering in all its branches. Indeed, its object was to do all in its power to protect its members and to render their career of usefulness greater. It was perfectly obvious that the certificate of membership of the Institute must be of the greatest practical value, not only to members, but also to the public, whom, of course, he the more immediately represented, for it was a guarantee that a member should be possessed of the necessary technical knowledge, and also be a man of integrity. He was glad to observe that there were scholarships, and he noted two by Lloyd's Register. Also there was a gold medal accruing from £250, presented by the late Dr. Denny. He was glad also to think that, following the example of the City Guilds, the Institute had a loving care for the members who had fallen on evil days. And it helped the widows and orphans. Their new premises were to cost about £9,500, of which £8,000 had been subscribed. He earnestly hoped, and confidently believed, that before the building was finished that balance would not only have been provided, but possibly through the generosity of its members and friends an endowment fund might be secured so as to enable the Institute greatly to increase its sphere of usefulness. He heartily wished every prosperity to the Institute of Marine Engineers in its new home.

Mr. JAMES DENNY, in briefly reviewing the work of the Institute, said it was formed some twenty-five years ago, and therefore it was either just completing or was just on the eve of completing its semi-jubilee. About twenty-five years ago a small body of enthusiasts of the unpropitious number of 13 gathered together and discussed what they believed to be a want of connection between marine engineers all over the world. They felt that if they could do something to bring marine engineers together they would be doing a service to them all. With this before them they founded the Institute, and he thought the success of the Institute had justified their actions. But he thought they could very well believe that those pioneers of twenty-five years ago, could not, in their most sanguine moments, have looked forward to such a day as that, when their Institute was honoured by having as its president the Chairman of Lloyd's Register, and by having the Lord Mayor of London to lay the foundation stone of premises such as theirs would be. They might, he thought, believe that the survivors of that gallant band must feel that their cup of joy and congratulation was well-nigh running over. The financial aspect of the Institute might call for a few words. It was only because its financial success had been so great that the possibility of premises such as were being erected had been—well, possible. The financial success of the Institute had been, to a certain extent, helped by friends and members outside the Institute proper; but in great part the financial success had been due to its own members. It might be asked why the marine engineer was so favoured, and the answer was not difficult to supply. The marine engineer had served his employer well, and he had served the public well. He thought it might be said in these times of labour unrest marine engineers had not been particularly restless. Whether this was due to his more or less satisfaction with the conditions of employment which he had been able to make for himself, or whether it was due to the fact that the marine engineer is, or was supposed very largely to hail from Scotland and the north, and so was actuated with so much native caution that he liked to see the end of an enterprise as well as the beginning before he entered, he could not say. It would be very difficult to find any body of men upon whom so many calls had been made as on the marine engineer. In his own time, which went back to nearly fifty years, they had changed from boiler pressures of 25 lbs. and simple engines, to boiler

pressures of 220 lbs. and quadruple engines. And his friend Mr. Summers Hunter here reminded him that it was not now a case of only of boilers of 200 lbs. pressure, but that pressure with the use of superheaters. They had passed more or less from reciprocating engines to the rotary engine, better known as the turbine. And they were changing over from the simple turbine to the geared turbine. And then there was the oil engine. That engine, he thought, would become much more possible when those magnates who controlled the industry were prepared to sell their products at a reasonable rate. It could be no secret that they, as marine engineers, who were called upon to advise their clients, had very great difficulty in advising them to take up the oil engine, until oil was at a much lower price than it could be bought for at the present time. He need hardly tell them that all the calls which had been made upon marine engineers had all been met, and cheerfully responded to. Let them think for a moment of the career of the marine engineer. He went through his apprenticeship in the works. Then he might work as a journeyman for a short time, but a very large proportion of the men wanted to better themselves, and to go to sea. They went to sea. After a very few months at sea they were placed more or less in charge of their own watch, and, therefore, very early in life were made to feel that upon their shoulders had been placed a direct personal responsibility. Anyone who had such responsibility placed upon him must feel that he has his character made in a way nothing else could do. In that way they made real men, and he thought the training of marine engineers made real men of them. The marine engineers had one advantage over others. The marine engineer had a poet of his own. Most of them, he supposed, knew Rudyard Kipling, and how he sang of MacAndrew, and how he told the story of the great MacPhee, in a way, he thought, that made their hearts beat faster with exaltation, and often, perhaps, brought tears of sympathy to their eyes. In that way the marine engineers had been almost immortalised. When they thought of that day they would not be very far wrong, or they might be forgiven, in suggesting that on that day had really fallen the apotheosis of the marine engineer.

The following office-bearers of the Institute were then presented to the Lord Mayor:—

Chairman of Council, Mr. Joseph Hallett.

Deputy Chairman of Council, Mr. John Clark.

Hon. Secretary, Mr. Jas. Adamson.

Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Alex. H. Mather.

Chairman of City Premises Committee, Mr. R. Leslie,
R.N.K.

Vice-President, Mr. J. T. Milton.

„ Mr. Alexander Boyle.

„ Mr. J. H. Rosenthal.

Architect, Mr. Victor Wilkins.

The Architect, Mr. V. Wilkins, then presented a silver trowel to the Lord Mayor, who immediately proceeded with the ceremony of laying the stone.

The LORD MAYOR, performing the ceremony of the day, said “I declare this stone well and truly laid.”

Mr. T. L. DEVITT, in proposing a most hearty vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for his presence, and for the part he had taken in the day's proceedings, remarked upon the fact that the Lord Mayor had made allusion to City guilds. He had been looking through the list before he came to the foundation stone laying and found there were nearly 80 such guilds. He was wondering whether, as they had a Shipwrights' Company and other livery companies, the engineers should not have a livery company in the City of London. He threw that out as a hint. He could only assure engineers that a great many shipowners, friends of his, would be glad to be associated with such a guild. In these days, when some people wanted to make breaches between employer and employee, between one class of the community and another, it was a great thing to have unanimity of purpose. Engineers were so accustomed to make every part of the mechanism in their charge work in a perfect way that he thought the community might take a lesson from them and try and make a harmonious arrangement between the engineers and the shipowners they worked for. They might have a livery company connected with marine engineers which might prove of immense value in the future for the profession and for the City of London. He would like them to try the experiment.

LORD INCHCAPE said he had great pleasure in seconding the resolution proposed by Mr. Devitt. They were greatly indebted to the Lord Mayor for his presence, and for taking such a prominent part in the ceremony which they had had the pleasure of attending that day. In the speeches which had been made by the Lord Mayor and by Mr. Denny they must

have realised that more or less they were in an engine-room, because of the noise around them due to the traffic passing. Mr. Denny was, he had humorously suggested, brought there that day to speak because he knew how to bellow. Still, it was extremely difficult to give a speech when they had noises all around them. He had great pleasure in seconding the resolution which had been so ably proposed by Mr. Devitt, and he desired to say that they were greatly indebted to the Lord Mayor for what he had done that day for them.

MR. SUMMERS HUNTER, who supported, said he was proud of the privilege of being associated with the vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for the work he had performed that day. He ventured to say that during his year of office the Lord Mayor had not performed a more important work, nor one that would more greatly benefit the engineers of the future. Not only would engineers benefit, but so also would the trade and commerce of the country. He felt, therefore, that the work so well commenced that day must be gratifying to that small, but enterprising body who had brought it to such a successful issue. It would serve, he believed, to spur on those who came after, not only to complete this work, but to carry on the work of the Institute with greater vigour, and with greater success if possible, to the commerce of the country. He had great pleasure in supporting the resolution.

The vote of thanks was cordially agreed to.

THE LORD MAYOR, in reply, said he felt very grateful for the vote of thanks. He thoroughly agreed with the words of Mr. Summers Hunter that during his mayoralty he had never been engaged upon a more important work than that of that afternoon, and, for himself personally, he would say, that he had never had a more pleasant afternoon. The Institute, he thought started in the City under very favourable auspices. The little bits of that day's ceremony had fitted together with mathematical precision. But to some it might be a matter of regret that they had given the death blow to an old institution, for No. 13 was doomed, if indeed it was not already dead. If this were the result of the ability and devotion of 13 men—a work of value to-day and of great potential value—who could say that there was anything unlucky in No. 13?