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SIR WALTER MASSY-GREENE

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## Editorial

### Sir Walter Massy-Greene

### AN APPRECIATION

**S**IR WALTER MASSY-GREENE, a member of the Institute's Council, died on the 16th November at the age of 78.

Sir Walter was associated with the I.P.A. from its inauguration in 1943. During those years, he gave to the Institute the benefit of an experience and knowledge that were probably unique in Australia. There was hardly a phase of Australian life with which he was not personally familiar, for in his time he had been timber worker, banker, farmer, politician and statesman, financier and industrialist. He had travelled the length and breadth of the Continent; he knew the mines and stations of the outback as well as he knew Collins Street. His business interests were manifold and varied—non-ferrous metals, gold mining, paper, textiles, rubber, pastoral pursuits. His knowledge of industrial, commercial and political Australia was encyclopaedic.

But he was not just a practical man of affairs; he was also a thinker, and a student. He was well read in economics; he knew the jargon and the theoretical background of the science, and the significance of the Keynesian Revolution; he was aware of its merits and its limitations in practical matters; he could have participated in the most abstruse discussions by the experts of the profession without fear of being over-shadowed.

Out of his range of experience and knowledge, he had evolved a firm philosophy of life, based on a belief in the simple, homespun virtues of work, integrity, thrift and responsibility. In his view of things there was no sub-

stitute for good hard work honestly and faithfully performed; and he applied this rule sternly and unflinchingly to his own life. He was an uncompromising advocate of the doctrine of self-help.

He was unable to contemplate with equanimity much in the newer order of things and he could not help but view with something that was almost dismay some of the modern tendencies in political thinking and government legislation. He was essentially a product of a more rugged and individualistic era. He was too honest to find it easy to compromise with his own set philosophy and he made concessions to some of the newer ideas only with reluctance and misgiving.

He was a superb public speaker, colourful, forceful, yet jovial and good-humoured, with a turn of phrase that was arresting and compelling.

Above all he was a gentleman in the very finest sense of a very much misunderstood word. No one could be more forthright or outspoken in expressing opinions on controversial matters, but he was invariably courteous, considerate, and charming in personal relationships.

In his association with the I.P.A., extending over nearly ten years, it is literally true that there was hardly one subject discussed in our publications on which he did not generously give of his time to express a viewpoint which was usually comprehensive and always commanded respect and attention. One was always aware that behind the opinion was the authority of an extraordinarily wide and mature experience and of high intellectual power. Many bulky files of correspondence bear witness to the labour and conscientious concern which he bestowed on the Institute's work. The Institute leant on him perhaps more than was, strictly speaking, fair, considering the vast scope of his business responsibilities, but, no matter how busily occupied, he never failed to give our problems the most meticulous and prompt attention.

Sir Walter Massy-Greene was one of Australia's "great men." He was no seeker after personal publicity—although public affairs were meat and drink to him—but in the last 20 years of his life he was content to do his work, steadily and faithfully, and, except to those in financial and business circles, the remarkable range of his activities was possibly little appreciated by the great mass of the Australian public. But in that time the volume and value of his work would be surpassed by few, if any, Australians.

He has left a gap which cannot be filled—partly because he was the product of a world now gone, partly because he had a breadth of experience so extensive as to be almost unattainable, partly because of his own innate qualities and substantial character. He will be sorely missed by the numerous companies which prospered under his leadership, by his many personal friends, and not least by the I.P.A. of which he was a loyal, unwavering supporter and an "elder statesman."

