RECEPTION TO VISITING SCIENTISTS

As part of the Melbourne Centenary Celebrations, the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association was held at Melbourne, and was attended by doctors from many parts of the world. Many of the visitors were members of the English Medico-Legal Society, among them being Sir William Willcox and Professor Sydney Smith. To welcome these gentlemen, the Society held a luncheon at Menzies' Hotel on the 11th September, 1935. The President, Mr. W. K. FULLAGAR, K.C., occupied the chair. We reproduce the account of the luncheon from *The Age* of 12th September, 1935:

DOCTORS v. LAWYERS

MEDICO-LEGAL SOCIETY ENJOYS ITSELF

Mr. Menzies' Broadsides

And Sir W. Willcox's Rapier Thrusts

Humorous sallies between the Attorney-General and the distinguished toxicologist, Sir William Willcox, enlivened the Medico-Legal Society luncheon at Menzies' yesterday. As the name implies, the Society interests itself in matters that concern both professions, and is an exact replica in miniature of the British parent body, which has done important work since its inauguration thirty years ago. The luncheon was given in honour of Sir W. Willcox and Professor S. Smith (Edinburgh).

In a whimsical speech, in which he playfully crossed swords with the doctors present, Mr. Menzies said the Association, though a comparatively young body, had listened to some of the most brilliant lectures ever given. He referred to those delivered by Mr. Eugene Gorman and himself. (Laughter.) During the voyage out on the *Aorangi* (Mr. Menzies travelled on the "doctors' ship") he conducted some research into Sir William Willcox's life, and discovered that his chief hobby was cycling, a somewhat

lonely and melancholy occupation, eminently suited to a toxicologist. On the *Aorangi* Sir William Willcox was asked by him to lecture on "Eminent Poisoners I Have Dined With." Unfortunately, he was an absolute washout on that occasion. (Laughter.) It was to be hoped that the presence of so many persons who represented the greatest profession on earth—that of the law—would stimulate him to-day to do something better. (Loud laughter.)

England, continued Mr. Menzies, had an entirely false reputation as the home of strong, silent men. People over there said, "Oh, you come from Australia!" and when you penitently admitted it, they added, in a sniffy way, "That is the country, isn't it, where people are always making speeches?" Then you looked at the programme and found that there were sixteen speakers.

Sir W. Willcox conveyed the greetings of the parent organization in England, which, he said, began thirty years ago. At its meetings they always found great difficulty in making the lawyers talk. However, since travelling on the *Aorangi* he had altered his opinion about that. The Attorney-General talked the whole time, taking on his listeners in relays, and exhausting one after another. (Loud laughter.)

The English Society, went on the speaker, ventilated matters that needed reform, and it now exercised great influence. It enabled the doctor to get to know the lawyer and *vice versa.* This was a difficult thing to achieve, for the doctor tried to view a subject from the point of view of justice and truth. (Laughter.) He congratulated the Victorian body on the excellence of its work, and especially on the articles in its journal, every one of which he had read with pleasure.

Dealing with reforms that had been effected by the Society, Sir William Willcox said that the Pharmacy Act of 1933 instituted a Poisons Board to deal with the sale of poisons, and much good would inevitably come of its recommendations. Another reform effected by the Society was the amending of the law relating to coroners. At Home, coroners did splendid work, and as a result of the amendment, duplication of trials, as before a court and a coroner also, was abolished.

As an illustration of the value of co-operation between the legal and medical professions, Sir William Willcox cited the case of a young woman who died while receiving a shampoo in a London hairdresser's establishment. At the trial it was disclosed that a poisonous gas emanating during

the process of shampooing had killed the girl. Later, when aircraftsmen were being mysteriously poisoned after having treated planes with "dope" or varnish, it was comparatively easy for chemists to trace the trouble to the self-same toxic gas that had caused the death of the girl.