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Rt. Wor. Bro. EVAN MANDER-JONES
(1902 - 1975)

Rt. Wor. Bro. Evan Mander-Jones was born on 6 July 1902 at Homebush, Sydney, fourth child of Australian born parents, George Mander-Jones, Physician, and his wife, Margaret Flemming, nee Arnott. Evan was descended from William Arnott, to biscuit king, and David Jones of department store fame. He attended Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) and the University of Sydney where he gained a B.A. in 1924 and Dip. Ed. in 1925. He was employed as an assistant master from 1926 to 1930 and then as housemaster from 1933 to 1938 at his old school. In the years between these appointments he studied at University College, Oxford, gaining a B.A. in 1933 and an M.A. in 1937.

After serving from 1922 in the Militia, Evan Mander-Jones was called up for duty as an intelligence officer on 13 November 1939. In May 1940 he transferred to the Australian Imperial Force and in October he sailed for the Middle East with Headquarters, 1 Corps.

Sent to Sumatra, Netherlands East Indies in January 1942, he helped Dutch civilians and refugees from Malaya to elude the invading Japanese by taking them from Palembang to Oosthaven and from there to Merak in Java; he then returned to Sumatra and helped to destroy the port of Oosthaven. For this work he received the O.B.E. in 1943.

Back in Australia, Mander-Jones succeeded C.A.E. Fenner as South Australia's Director of Education. During the next twenty-one years he had to deal with a phenomenal growth in education in the State; primary school enrolments doubled to over 150,000 and secondary school enrolments increased six-fold to 70,000. The annual percentage of the Government's budget spent on education rose from 11.5% in 1947-48 to 24.9% in 1966-67. The Director faced two immediate difficulties - a lack of school buildings and a shortage of teachers. As a 'temporary' solution, pre-fabricated classrooms were introduced and schools were consolidated. Staff numbers were increased by the employment of married women and teachers from Britain, by the re-employment of retired teachers, and by a campaign to recruit young people into the profession.

Evan Mander-Jones was an Australian representative at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's biennial conference in Paris in 1952. In 1953 he inspected schools in Britain and the United States of America and attended the twenty-first joint U.N.E.S.C.O. and International Bureau of Education conference in Geneva. A guest of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1965, he observed educational practices in that country, and in Britain and the U.S.A.

He claimed that he had to print the report of his 1958 tour himself because it was "unpopular with the Government" as it proposed "expensive changes to the existing set up". In particular he recommended the establishment of different types of Secondary Schools, and advocated both vocational and further education. By the 1960's, under Mander-Jones, guidance technical schools were developing imaginative general courses, rather than concentrating solely on trade skills, and were promoting adult education classes and vocational education courses.

Mander-Jones presided over the Education Department with dignity and scholarly concern. He believed that the "ultimate object of education" was "to fit every boy and girl to live the most satisfactory life for themselves and for their fellows". Faced with agitation for curriculum reform and equal pay for female teachers, he claimed that he had always found that teachers will proceed further through conference and round table discussions than through processions and demonstrations. He retired in 1967.

A member of the Legacy Club of Adelaide and the Greater Adelaide Planning Commission, Mander-Jones was a council Member of the Flinders University of South Australia and Roseworthy Agricultural College, and a committee member of the State branches of the Boy Scouts Association, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Gowrie Scholarship Trust Fund. He was President of the State Chapter of the Australian College of Education and the South Australian Public Schools Music Society. He wrote a history of Craft Masonry in South Australia 1814-1934 published 1976. He belonged to the Adelaide Club and the Naval, Military and Air Force Club and enjoyed mountain walking. Survived by his wife and three sons, he died on 18 July 1975 while holidaying in Noumea and was buried in Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

Evan Mander-Jones was initiated in Lodge Renown No 360 United Grand Lodge of New South Wales on 14 July 1931 at Turramurra, Sydney. He was passed Fellowcraft on 8 August 1931. By dispensation, he was raised a Master Mason on 11 August 1931. He Called off fro Lodge Renown on 11 February 1958.

He affiliated with St Michaels Lodge No 166, Grand Lodge of South Australia, on 19 April 1948 and St Alban Lodge No 38, Grand Lodge of South Australia on 8 May 1975.

He was Installed as Worshipful Master of St Michaels No 166, on 15 November 1954.

He was appointed a Grand Steward in 1960 and Junior Grand Warden in 1970 of the Grand Lodge of South Australia.

Acknowledgements:

Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 15. pp 294/5. Ed John Ritchie.
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