

## The New Common Room

The last day of term (14th December, 1962) will mark the end of occupation of the Common Room in its present form, as it will be taken over by the builders on the following Monday as a preliminary to its complete reconstitution.

Its passing marks the end of a very important phase in the development of the Bar. Prior to the completion and occupation of Wentworth Chambers, the Bar of New South Wales had never had premises in which its members could meet one another on a social basis, though they gathered in coffee shops and restaurants for morning and afternoon coffee and meals. No significant part of the Bar ever assembled for social purposes except at the Annual Dinner and at the Annual Cocktail Party. The common room has provided a meeting place which the Bar has been able to call its own and which has given the Bar a feeling of cohesion and unity which it has never had before. One particularly important result has been that the newly admitted barrister has been able to meet and become known to his fellow practitioners much more quickly than would otherwise be possible. Another very happy feature has been the use of the common room by an ever increasing number of the Judges.

The common room has also been the venue in the last couple of years for a series of dining-in nights which have enabled limited numbers of the Bar to dine together occasionally in a leisurely way after the week's work is over.

The present arrangements, however, have had some disadvantages. The one large room has had to act as library, dining-room, lounge and general office; and the kitchen was quite inadequate for the demands made upon it.

The demolition of Selborne Chambers and the erection of the new building to take their place will result, through the co-operation of the board of directors of Counsel's Chambers Limited, in the accommodation available for the use of the Bar Association being increased to nearly four times its present size. This increase in size gives use to a great opportunity to provide enormously improved facilities for the Association and the House Committee presided over by Pilcher has devoted a great amount of time and effort in conjunction with the architects and the board of Counsel's Chambers Limited, the best means of using the space and decorating it properly.

The new area available will provide a separate library, a dining-room, a lounge room, an enlarged kitchen (with a cool-room), and a small bar. In addition there will be a board-room and adequate office and storage space for the Association and Counsel's Chambers Limited.

The library, which will be separate from all the other rooms will be approximately fifty feet by twenty feet and will house the whole of the Association's present library with ample space for expansion in the foreseeable future. Several reading desks will be installed for the convenience of anyone who wishes to work there

rather than in his own chambers. The floor will be covered in plastic tiles for quietness.

The dining-room which will be about sixty feet by thirty feet, has been planned to seat over one hundred persons, which will provide for the increase in the number of meals served which may be expected to follow the concentration in the building of some 350 members of the Bar. The dining-room will be located in the northern end of the Association's premises and will be floored with parquet.

To the south of the dining-room—substantially in the area now occupied by the present kitchen, office and common room—will be located the lounge (60 ft. by 36 ft.). It will open off the dining-room, being separated from it, if present plans come to fruition, by a Thai silk curtain in three different shades. It will thus be possible when occasion demands, to throw into one large space, the dining-room and the lounge, and it is envisaged that it will be possible to hold the Annual Dinner and the Bench and Bar Buffet Party in the combined space. The lounge will be fitted with a number of lounge chairs and will be floored with the same type parquet as the dining room but will probably have a number of Indian rugs for comfort and appearance.

In one corner of the lounge, there will be a small bar and it is anticipated that a liquor licence will be obtained by the Association and that the bar will be open for a couple of hours in the evening every week-day during term. Provision is being made for a small cellar.

The kitchen has been designed to facilitate the convenient service of a large number of meals in a short time. It will be much better designed than the present kitchen. It will be located on the Phillip Street side of the dining-room, and will have its own cool-room for the storage of food. A service lift will bring supplies in from the Phillip Street level thus avoiding the necessity for carrying food downstairs or in the public lifts.

On the eastern (or Macquarie Street) side of the dining-room, will be located the administrative offices of the Bar Association and Counsel's Chambers Limited. There will be a board-room in which will be the Council table (formerly A.M.P. Society Board table and presented to the Council by Mr. H. G. Daley) which is large enough to seat the whole Council. This will be a convenient meeting place for committees as well as for the whole Council. In addition, there will be a comfortable office for the Registrar, as well as a general office and room for an assistant secretary, in due course. A public corridor which will traverse the administrative offices and give access to the library will be floored in plastic tiles for silence and ease of cleaning and maintenance.

The detailed planning of the layout of the area has, of course, been largely a matter for the architects who have at all times readily given advice to the House Committee and have had regard to their views on relative needs of the varying functions which the whole area must provide for. To assist in planning the decor of the area, the Council has recently engaged the services

of a well-known interior decorator, Mrs. Ninette Boothroyd, A.S.T.C. One of the problems of the Association area was the fact that the ceiling was a very low one, having regard to the extensive floor area involved in the dining-room and lounge and the tentative plan of decoration which has been on exhibition in the common room for some time, is designed to give an impression of greater height than in fact exists.

To this end, it has been determined to avoid the use of panelling, which being dark and monochrome, tends to produce a lowering effect and to use patterned wallpaper on the northern and southern walls of the dining-room and lounge.

In the dining-room it is hoped to provide meals of a somewhat higher standard than has been the case in the past, and it is proposed that it be furnished with table-cloths. With the improved kitchen, the result should be a much improved service in more pleasant surroundings.

The cost to the Council, despite generosity on the part of Counsel's Chambers Limited with regard to a number of the alterations, will be in the order of £7,000 to £9,000, precise estimates not having so far been worked out. The Council has, over the years built up some funds towards the costs, but had not originally anticipated that the rebuilding of Selborne would be achieved as early as 1962-1963. However, it has about £2,000 now available towards the equipping of the new common room. It is thought that it will be possible to borrow say, £3,000 to £3,500 on a long term basis, which will leave £3,000 to £3,500 to be raised from members of the Bar. Thought has been devoted to means of raising such a fund, and no final decision has been made. In the meantime, some existing floor-groups have made most generous donations to the Association for the furnishing fund; and if their example is followed there may be no need for any organised scheme of money raising.

## Tertiary Education

Early this year the Federal Government set up a committee to look into tertiary education in Australia and to report to the Universities Commission upon the subject. This committee as originally set up contained no representative of the legal profession but, following representations by the Law Council of Australia, Professor A. P. Derham of the University of Melbourne Law School was appointed as one of its members. The Law Council advised member bodies that they should make their own representations to the committee as conditions varied very considerably from State to State and it was felt that representations from the various States would be more useful to the committee than a mere summary of the views of the different State bodies.

In these circumstances the Council prepared a submission which was forwarded to the committee as the views of the Bar Council.

### *Summary of Report*

This submission was concerned primarily with legal education as a preparation for practice at the Bar although it expressed the view that most students seek to prepare themselves for both branches of the profession, delaying the ultimate choice for as long as possible.

The submission indicated that the Council took the view that any consideration of the educational needs of the Bar must begin with the recognition that from its ranks the Bench is staffed. It stated that members of the Bench need a broad sympathy with modern culture, as well as technical mastery of the law, and that education for the Bar is also education for the Bench.

By far the greater number of those practising at the Bar in New South Wales have qualified by taking the degree course at a University, usually, of course, the University of Sydney. The alternative method of qualifying by sitting for the examinations of the Barristers Admission Board is used comparatively infrequently by those actually proceeding to practice at the Bar, al-

though it is used by public servants and others who wish to become admitted as barristers as an additional qualification in their work, without having any intention of practising. The Council is strongly of the view that legal studies should be pursued, by those wishing to practice at the Bar, in a Law School, and that, in the modern world, it is not a sound method of legal education for students to be left to their own devices in their study of the law and to present themselves for examination as a result of private study.

The retention of entry to practice at the Bar through the examinations of the Barristers Admission Board is frequently justified on the ground that it enables persons without means to become barristers. However, times have changed a great deal and provision of scholarships to students is now liberal by comparison with earlier days, and, since most professions have long since resorted to full time study over a significant number of years as the proper method of professional education, the Bar Council believes that the appropriate long term approach to legal education for practice at the Bar should be along the same lines and that the long term planning for legal education for the Bar should proceed upon an assumption that true tertiary education should be available for all those wishing to prepare themselves to practice at the Bar.

It appears to be impossible, in Australian conditions, for financial and other reasons, for the profession to provide education at a tertiary level for those wishing to enter its ranks, and the only satisfactory method for the education for candidates for admission to the Bar is through the Law Schools of the Universities. There is a difference in the approach of the Bar and the solicitors to the need for fulltime courses. At the University of Sydney Law School there are, at the present time, two courses available, namely, a four-year course the last two years of which are part-time, and a five-year course during which part-time studies are engaged in. The former course allows three years of articles which can