

1978

A hundred years ago, in 1878, the University classes of St Andrews College, known as V-C the "College Department", received formal recognition when the Colonial Government approved of an annual grant to the College in return for an undertaking to prepare candidates for the degree examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope (which had been established in 1873). For the next twenty-six years, the College department retained its separate identity, but also its links with St Andrews College and, by the turn of the century, four professors were serving on its staff. The recorded history of that period contains references to the high standards maintained by the College Department, and I may quote the following extract from R F Currey's History of St Andrews College : "In December 1899 (Prof) Mathews crowned his many triumphs by passing every one of his candidates, one of them securing the first place in South Africa".

Not only did the College department provide the physical beginning of Rhodes University College, in 1904, but when its staff and its students were all taken up in the new University College, St Andrews College continued for some time to provide accommodation for students and also for lectures.

The first part of our proceedings this morning is intended to mark, in this hall, within the precincts of St Andrew's College, the centenary of the founding of the College Department and the advent of formal tertiary education to Grahamstown. So doing, we pay tribute to the magnificent contribution of St Andrew's College to education in Grahamstown and in South Africa and we honour all those whose far-sighted efforts paved the way for the establishment of a University in this City.

When, in a short while, we move in procession to the Great Hall, we will be re-enacting the course of history as it unfolded in 1904, and the second part of our proceedings will be a continuation of our tribute to all our founders and benefactors and to those who have brought honour to their Alma mater.

May I thank the Council, the Headmaster, the Staff and the scholars of St Andrew's College for their generous co-operation.