

SPOTLIGHT

on Johannesburg Branch students' evening

by G.M. WRIGHT*

We are only as good as we are perceived to be by others and, whilst there is every opportunity to revise and polish our written works, there are no second chances with a spoken presentation. At every level, conferences and seminars have been metaphorical graveyards for many an academic reputation.

In view of this, it was an excellent idea of the SAIMM's Johannesburg Branch to invite students from the University of the Witwatersrand and from the Technikon Witwatersrand to deliver a series of technical papers to an audience drawn from their peers and tutors and from the industry. Wisely, attendance was by invitation only, which served to ensure a good turnout in case there had been any doubts about this possibility. The meeting was held on 11th September, 1990.

Papers

The four speakers, one representing mining and one metallurgy at each institution, delivered papers of 20 minutes' duration. All the speakers are to be commended on a generally high standard of presentation, especially for keeping to time. Within the constraints set, each presenter managed to deliver a balanced message; none contained too much or too little material to any serious degree.

No questions were allowed. Each presentation was rounded off by a few words from a pre-selected member of the audience to put the material in context. This was appropriate to this audience, but the Branch might like to consider future events of a rather different nature at which the speakers can receive feedback on their presen-

tation skills, as well as on the content of their papers.

Subject Matter

A wide range of subject matter was presented, as is apparent from the programme;

- 'Recommendations for the Rehabilitation of Land Disturbed by Coal Mining at South African Coal Estates', by S.H. Badenhorst of Wits University
- 'To Develop a Process Flowsheet for the Recovery of a Saleable Grade Tin Concentrate', by S. Mohammed of Technikon Witwatersrand
- 'Brick Mesh Pack', by W. Taylor of Technikon Witwatersrand
- 'The Use of Surface Coatings to Improve the Wear and Corrosion Resistance of 304L and 316L Stainless Steels', by A. van Bennekom of Wits University.

Whilst it would have been possible to argue and debate some of the assertions made, and the asides offered, the audience could scarcely fail to be impressed by the speakers' enthusiasm and attention to detail, and by the wide range of topics addressed. There could have been nobody present who did not learn something that evening.

Conclusion

Held in the well-equipped facility at the Head Office of Gold Fields of South Africa, the proceedings were rounded off with a cocktail party in very congenial surroundings that was sponsored by the Branch.

This was in every way a successful venture by the Johannesburg Branch and deserves to become an annual event. I venture to suggest that, with the standards achieved and the interest generated, the next such function will be very well attended.

* Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Co. Ltd, P.O. Box 590, Johannesburg 2000.

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