

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS  
BY SIR KENNETH WHEARE

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THE most important business which we have transacted today is, I believe, the election of Fellows. This is a matter to which our Sections give most careful consideration and rightly so. We know that election to fellowship of the Academy is regarded as a high honour and it is proper that our choice should be made with discrimination. More important than this, however, is the contribution which a succession of Fellows can make to the work of the Academy, to its continuance and development. I would like, therefore, to begin today by congratulating the new Fellows upon their election and by welcoming them to the Academy. But in saying this I am conscious of the fact that they are not here today. This has led me to wonder whether we ought not to arrange our affairs in the future so that we may, with the minimum of formality and the maximum of friendliness, admit and welcome our new Fellows after their election. It occurs to me that, while it would probably not be appropriate to admit them immediately upon their election at the Annual General Meeting, it might well be feasible and desirable to admit and welcome them later in the year at some suitable social occasion. I propose to ask the Council to consider this matter at its next meeting.

A reference to our new Fellows leads me to speak of the considerable losses the Academy has sustained by death in this last year. Fourteen Fellows have died and they include the greatest classical scholar in this century, Sir John Beazley, and the outstanding Egyptologist, Professor Černý. I should like also to mention my own sense of personal loss at the deaths of Professor A. Ewert, Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, Professor H. J. Paton, Mr. A. N. Prior, and Mr. Ketton-Cremer. Obituaries of all the deceased Fellows will appear in our *Proceedings* in due course.

I turn now to mention briefly some aspects of the work of the Academy in the present and, we hope, in the future. As you have heard from the Secretary, there is plenty to report on research, on publications, and on academic exchanges. Indeed it is clear that there is much that the Academy can do, provided that it has the funds and the backing with which to do it. The

start which has been made on overseas professorships and fellowships, with the support of the Leverhulme and Wates Funds, is particularly encouraging. But in the long run the success of our activities depends on the trust which the Government places in us. I hope very much that the new Government will accord to the humanities that place in the scale of national priorities which it deserves. The pendulum has swung far in the direction of the natural sciences and understandably so; even a small swing in our direction would make an enormous difference.

The function for which the British Academy was originally created was, as you all know, the representation of Britain at international congresses concerned with the humanities. This is a function which we still perform, being represented each year at the meetings of the Union Académique Internationale and playing an active part in many of its international research projects. I am happy to say that this year our representative, Professor Eric Turner, was elected Vice-President for a term of three years. The headquarters of the U.A.I. is in Brussels but in alternate years it meets elsewhere. The last time the U.A.I. met in London was in 1951 and we have now intimated that we would welcome them again in London in June 1973.

The number of academies is growing. In the course of the year two new academies have been formed and it has given me particular pleasure to welcome them on your behalf. In the first place, under Royal Charter, there has been formed the Australian Academy of the Humanities, of which our Fellow, Sir Keith Hancock, is the first President. We shall hope to find fields of collaboration with it. Secondly, an Academy of Sciences, not confined to the humanities, has been formed in North Rhine-Westphalia, with its headquarters at Düsseldorf. This now joins the existing group of important regional German academies. Professor A. G. Dickens, our Foreign Secretary, attended the inauguration. We were also represented, earlier in the year, at the celebrations of the centenary of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Ever since its foundation the British Academy has had responsibilities in the field of social and political sciences. While it has not disregarded them, it would be fair to say that they have, so far as the Academy is concerned, been poor relations to the humanities. In the current year we have done something to redress the balance.

In the first place we have established direct relations with the Social Science Research Council, at which we now have an

Assessor as the Royal Society has had for a long time. The Government's support of social science research is channelled through the Social Science Research Council, just as its support for humanities research is channelled through the British Academy. It is valuable to be able to compare problems and methods, as well as to deal jointly with the marginal case, where our fields overlap.

Secondly, in conjunction with the Royal Society, we have reconstituted on broader lines the British National Committee for Geography, the local counterpart of the International Geographical Union. We have now taken joint responsibility with the Royal Society for this body, which will in future, through a subcommittee, occupy a central point in the consideration of the problems of geography in this country. Geography is a rapidly expanding subject and it is right that the British Academy should concern itself with those aspects of it which lie outside the natural sciences.

Thirdly, we have reviewed the coverage of our series of lectures, and, on the side of social sciences, have found them wanting. We have, therefore, taken three steps. We have decided to introduce an annual economics lecture, to be known as the Keynes Lecture. We shall each year invite an eminent economist to analyse recent progress in economic theory. We have also decided to institute a lecture in the field of social anthropology, to be known as the Radcliffe-Brown Lecture. This will be biennial and the cost, I am able to announce, will be shared with the Association of Social Anthropologists, who have generously offered the Academy the sum of £500 to be used as a fund for this lecture. Further, we have decided to make biennial the Maccabean Lecture in Jurisprudence. The fund on which this lecture depends can bear the additional expense. Together these innovations and changes make a significant addition to the Academy's contribution to thought and discussion in the field of the social studies.

May I mention another addition to our functions in this field. For twenty years the British Government has been the main national supporter of the International African Institute which plays a leading part in linguistic and ethnographical research in Africa. It has now been arranged that the Government's contribution to the Institute should be channelled through the British Academy.

Finally, within the field of social and political sciences, we are considering an extension to the range of activities covered

by the Thank-Offering to Britain Fund, our largest endowment in this field, in addition to the annual lecture and fellowships. Of this I hope there will be more to say next year.

I have referred more than once to the Royal Society. I am happy to say that we continue to enjoy cordial relations with them and receive much help from them. The joint symposium which we held with them last December on the Impact of the Natural Sciences on Archaeology was a great success. The first ever of its kind, it was very well attended and provoked very wide interest. The results are being published in a volume which I hope will be issued in November.

There will always be many matters of mutual concern between the Academy and the Royal Society. We hope to continue our discussions without too formal a system of interchanges. I look forward to proposing, before the last symposium is forgotten, another on a theme of mutual concern. The interaction of science and the humanities in the field of preservation of stained-glass windows could well suggest an appropriate theme; so also might the early history of agriculture.

Although I have thought it proper to emphasize our growth on the side of the social sciences I need hardly say that the greater part of our work concerns the humanities. In addition to substantially increased research and publications programmes and the inauguration of overseas professorships and fellowships, to which I have already alluded, I would like to mention two new undertakings to which we aspire. At this stage neither is assured, but it should be known in what direction we hope to move.

One of the most important parts of our activities is the network of variously named Schools and Institutes abroad. Their essential function is to provide a scholarly base or platform from which research in the widest range of subjects may take place in the countries or regions where they are located. They have tended to grow up and build their reputations round archaeological excavation; I would emphasize that their functions are not limited to this. The Schools and Institutes exist for any research function connected with the humanities.

We are now trying to extend the number of these bodies in two directions. The first is the establishment of an Institute, for research of all kinds, but in the first instance mainly archaeological, in Afghanistan. This may seem a remote area, but in fact Afghanistan is a key country in the study of Eastern antiquities and cultures. It is the meeting-ground in antiquity of the civiliza-

tions of Greece, China, India, and Persia (as Sir Aurel Stein recognized). In most respects its magnificent archaeological riches are virtually unexplored. Singularly little is known yet about the key kingdoms of Bactria and Kushan. French archaeology is well established in Afghanistan and there are American and Italian missions too, but little else has yet been done. Much preparation will be needed before an Institute can be founded, and, though we are assured of goodwill, the consent of the Afghan Government still needs to be obtained. But I think that Fellows will be interested to know that we are looking in this fresh direction, a relatively simple and inexpensive move to the north-east from our flourishing and by now well-established Institute of Persian Studies in Teheran. I may add Sir Max Mallowan, Chairman of the Persian Institute, is enthusiastically behind this Afghan development.

A longer-term, and in some respects more ambitious, project is the creation of an Institute for South-East Asian Studies somewhere in the Thai, Malaysian, or Indonesian area. Interest in South-East Asia is a growing feature in our universities and there is no doubt that it would be of immense value to them if there were established a base for research and fieldwork in the area. This is a concept of concern not only to this country but to Australia, and perhaps New Zealand, also. We are, therefore, starting to explore the feasibility of an Institute in that area, embracing the widest field of humanities and social studies. We would be delighted if a joint enterprise with Australia and New Zealand were to prove practicable. Professor Grahame Clark is leading these inquiries, on which I very much hope there will be more to report next year.

These developments merely carry a stage further the work of developing the Academy's activities which have been in progress for twenty years, during the period of Sir Mortimer Wheeler's secretaryship. I am delighted to be able to tell you that Sir Mortimer, at the invitation of the Council of the Academy, has written his account of those twenty years and of his stewardship during the period. I hope that it will be published by the end of the year. Lord Robbins and I have had the pleasure of reading the typescript. It is, I think, a record of achievement of which the Academy, as well as its author, can be proud. And, as you would expect, it is expressed with that highly individual touch with which we are all familiar. The author assures me that it contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. One cannot ask for more!

During this same period and more the work of the Academy has been supported by the labour of Miss Doris Pearson. After forty-four years in our service, forty as Assistant Secretary, she has earned her retirement, and not only that but the affection and respect of Fellows, past and present. It was decided earlier this year to invite Fellows to subscribe to a leaving gift. The response has been exceptionally generous and a sum of £450 has been collected. I am presenting her now with a silver rose-bowl, suitably inscribed to record the occasion, and a cheque for the balance. All Fellows will join with me in thanking her for her immense labours on behalf of the Academy and wishing her a long and happy retirement.

*Response by Miss Pearson*

I hardly know how to thank you enough for the splendid and most generous gifts which you have just bestowed upon me and for the very kind words which you, Mr. President, have used in doing so. It is truly for me a very moving occasion, the happy memories of which I shall for ever have with me.

When I look back over my forty-odd years of service, the time does not in fact seem a long one. Yet, because of the period during which it has fallen, it has been one of peculiar interest, for I am conscious of having had the opportunity to witness, in a very real sense, nothing less than the evolution of an institution during the difficult and formative years of its adolescence.

I was on duty when our rooms in Burlington Gardens were opened by Lord Balfour in 1928, and I have worked with all the four secretaries which the Academy has had. To the zeal and energy of the first, Sir Israel Gollancz, I owe not a little of my own enthusiasm for its work. What it stood for somehow caught my imagination in those early days: here, I felt, was something unique, which it would be a privilege to serve.

I will not deny that at times the going has been a little arduous, but the kindness and understanding which I have received on all sides have been a constant help. And now I take my leave at a moment when the Academy seems poised for further expansion of its activities. I wish it all good fortune in the great future which I am sure it will have. I should indeed be proud to think that I had in any way contributed over the years, however humbly, to its welfare. It has been my life and I have loved it. Thank you all again with all my heart.