

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY SIR GEORGE CLARK

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SINCE you have done me the great honour of re-electing me for a fourth and last year to the office of President, I have again the opportunity of speaking to you about our business and our aims. In my address a year ago I sketched the arrangements by which finance is provided for research in the Academy's subjects in this country. I did not, however, touch on the international organizations with which the Academy is concerned, though, as we all know, it is one of our functions to support these organizations and contribute to their work, while, in return, we and some of the societies with which we are in touch at home derive support from them. Some of our Fellows play very active parts as individuals in these international concerns, but naturally these concerns do not involve all of us equally, and perhaps not many of us are familiar with their operations. This year in the month of June, I was able for the first time to attend, as one of the Academy's delegation of three, the session of that international body to which we are closest, the Union Académique Internationale. The meetings were held, as they usually are, at the seat of the Union. This is in the splendid setting of the Palais des Académies in Brussels. Speaking in these rooms I am tempted to describe it presumptuously as an appropriately splendid setting. This year's meeting was a noteworthy occasion for us, because one of our own Fellows, Professor Mynors, after long and valued services as a British representative, took his seat for the first of his three years as President of the Union. I need not say, but I hope he will allow me to say it, that he showed the qualities that we know so well here, to the great benefit of the Union. The Union Académique meets in June at a time when our *Annual Report* is already in the hands of the printers. This year's *Report* therefore contains a succinct account of the previous annual 'Conference' of the Union, that which was held in Rome in 1956. In particular it summarizes from the report of the Conference the position reached in 1956 by eleven specific projects 'in which the Academy has a direct interest'. Our interest is not exactly of the same nature in all of these cases, and our *Report* also contains in another place much more recent news of four of

them, four regarding which the scholars responsible have reported immediately to us as well as to the Union. This arrangement, and the resulting cross-references from page 14 back to pages 10 and 11, are rational but confusing. It may be confusing again to find that we are concerned in some international projects, such as that for a new Repertory of Sources of Medieval History, of which the Union has no cognisance. I ought perhaps to indicate the explanation.

The Union Académique is a union of Academies and similar bodies: it admits such bodies to its membership if they satisfy the generally recognized requirements of academic quality and independence. At present it has twenty-four members, representing a rather smaller number of countries. Latin America is not included, nor any country of Asia except Japan. Czechoslovakia and Poland are there, but not Russia. The Union takes under its auspices projects which its members bring to its attention, provided the projects in turn pass the appropriate tests. Many of these projects depend on international control for their satisfactory execution. The map of the Roman Empire on the scale of one to a million, for instance, must have a uniform cartographical basis, uniform symbols, and satisfactory transitions from sheets prepared by the scholars of one modern state and language to those of their next neighbours. A standing body like the Union Académique, with habits of co-operating which already deserve to be called a sound tradition, can facilitate projects such as this in many ways even if their finance is provided by or through the separate national Academies. Its constitution also enables it to provide money. Juridically it is recognized by the law of Belgium as a body capable of such activities, and each member makes a contribution to its funds.

Only a very small part of these funds is needed for the excellent secretarial services of the Union: in the main the Belgian Royal Academy provides these gratuitously. The Union's funds are available for grants to necessitous projects; but they are not on a large scale. The Union has its own assured, if modest, income; but it is also one of the learned bodies which raise funds, or rather apply for them, from outside sources. Some of the foreign members must find it hard to understand why it receives a 'subvention', earmarked for the Corpus Aristotelicum, from the Jowett Copyright Trustees. The one great outside body with which it has constant relations is the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. To this it has access in more ways than one. If one of its projects falls within the scope

of something actually undertaken by UNESCO itself UNESCO may grant it direct support. Such an enterprise is the micro-filming of unpublished documents concerning Japan, which falls into the scope of a broad inquiry into the relations of East and West, known as the 'UNESCO East West Major Project'. Other projects may receive grants if they are approved by the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, the specialized organ of UNESCO seated in Paris. Since little has ever been said about these bodies in our *Reports*, I may remark that this Academy is strongly represented on the National Co-operating Body for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. We provide it with a meeting-place in our Council Room. We also have Fellows who are members of the comprehensive National Commission for the United Kingdom which stands in the same relation to UNESCO as a whole. I hope that in the future we shall find more opportunities than we have found in the past for bringing business before them and availing ourselves of their help. At the Brussels Conference three important figures, present as observers and advisers, were the representative of UNESCO, Monsieur Bammate, the Secretary General of CIPSH, who is our own Fellow, Professor Syme, and his *adjoint* Monsieur Jean d'Ormesson. Sir Charles Webster, our Foreign Secretary, whose services during the year I gratefully acknowledge, has been, as we all know, at the centre of these affairs from the beginning, and happily he was a member of our delegation in Brussels.

If this description has become tedious it may have shown that the Union Académique has to overcome the obstacles which are inevitable in international business. It seems that it could certainly make admirable use of greater freedom of action. If it could receive large funds either by way of endowment or by way of block grants for periods of years, we can be sure that they would be well bestowed. Even if that does not come about (and there is no reason to expect it) it is permissible to ask whether we as an Academy can do more for and through the Union. I would suggest, and I believe others will agree, that there are some directions in which we could do more. At present the weight of the interest of the Union is mainly in ancient and medieval subjects. Of the seventeen projects handled at Brussels only three deal exclusively with more recent matters, those on the Dictionary of the Terminology of International Law and on the Works of Hugo Grotius and that which I have mentioned regarding Japan. I believe that if we were more clearly aware of the value of international supervision and collaboration, we should try to bring into the

programme of the Union Académique some of the work carried on in this country in modern history and the social sciences. We should perhaps be more forward to invoke its help in other matters, and we should certainly try to make our own part in the projects of the Union proportionate to that of other countries. In the work of the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, to mention only one instance, scholars in this country are enthusiastically at work, but the funds at their disposal are far too small, and for that reason we have less to show than several of the Continental countries which are already publishing the results of their surveys.

Once more I have come back to the need for much more money for our studies, in other words for much greater numbers of qualified scholars with leisure and equipment for original work. We know that in this country there is a great clamour for skilled workers of every kind. There are not enough miners or transport-drivers or policemen or solicitor's clerks or clergy. Above all we hear every day that there is a shortage of scientists and technologists. Industrial firms have subscribed more than three million pounds to the Industrial Fund for the Advancement of Scientific Education in Schools. This is being spent mainly in contributions towards the building of laboratories. Another, much smaller, fund assists university students who wish to transfer their attention from the arts subjects to the natural sciences. If these and other similar endeavours all succeed, it seems that they must diminish the numbers of students of these arts subjects, not only the relative proportion but the absolute numbers. There may be people who judge that this result would be socially desirable. If so their opinion must be merely conjectural since they cannot have access to any serious estimate of how many such students, the scholars and teachers of the future, are needed. So far as I know estimates of that kind do not exist in the United Kingdom. I believe it is true of every Section of this Academy that its members are aware of a need to maintain, if not to increase, the numbers. I find, for instance, in this year's Presidential Address given by our retiring Vice-President, Professor Driver, to the International Organization of Old Testament Scholars, this sentence: 'Our greatest need remains to be mentioned: a constant supply of young recruits, trained in various disciplines and exhibiting the highest qualities of scholarship, to carry on the torch when the present generation of scholars has laid it down.' In those studies the present generation of scholars has a remarkable record of discovery and inter-

pretation. Here, at any rate, in the room where so many courses of Schweich Lectures have been delivered, there is no need to demonstrate the value of these discoveries and interpretations, and consequently of the 'various disciplines' and the 'highest qualities of scholarship' which made them possible. Your Council is considering the possibility of carrying out and publishing a thorough survey of the needs of higher study in the subjects represented by the Academy. These inquiries are at present in too early a stage for a full statement to be possible of the intended scope of such a survey; I will only say that, if it is carried out, it will deal with the defects of organization which I discussed last year, and will also assemble information about the restriction of development by financial stringency. It will include any practical proposals that may commend themselves.

During the past year much has happened to make us feel that these questions are even more urgent than we supposed. You will have noticed in our *Report* the conclusions of the strong Committee which has worked out the allocation of the Pilgrim Trust Grant. This Committee records its opinion that the grant has been of substantial value in enabling workers in many humanistic fields to carry on their work, and it further says that it could quite easily have disbursed larger sums with great advantage. The Council and the Sections might well have used the same words of their labours in dividing the available sums among the many deserving societies and institutions which have put forward claims. The two greater bodies which I mentioned last year, the National Institute for Economic and Social Research, and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, have fortunately received very substantial help, from one of the great Foundations, the Ford Foundation, and some of their anxieties are relieved for a short term of years to come. But nothing is guaranteed beyond that, and the general outlook still causes concern. During the winter, as we all know, the national finances were unexpectedly difficult. With relief and with real gratitude we heard from the Treasury that our block grant was not merely maintained at its old level but even slightly increased. A small sum, £500, was available for the new purpose of subsidizing those local record societies on behalf of which we had for the first time put forward a claim. We were, however, like other applicants for government support, disappointed in our hopes for new developments. In particular no money was forthcoming for the plans of our Archaeological and Historical Committee for the Colonial Territories. One of these, for an Institute in East

Africa, had made heavy drafts on the energy and imagination of our Secretary, and in thanking him once more for his achievements during the year, I should like to assure him that we very greatly regret the postponement of this scheme. We hope that it may be brief. If we can make our intentions effective it will be brief.

Outside our own immediate sphere there have been events to remind us that in these revolutionary times the cause of learning requires vigilant defence and resourceful adaptiveness. The British Museum has announced that it cannot complete one of the great works of British scholarship, the revision of its General Catalogue, on the plan which was initiated a generation ago. We wish every success to the new, more economical, more expeditious and altogether admirable plan which is now being undertaken. Another notable change has occurred in the arrangements for research at what may be called the junior or initial level. On convincing grounds of social policy it was decided that the Government should no longer provide maintenance grants to supplement the awards made by universities and colleges to those who study for advanced or research degrees. In the subjects with which we are not concerned this decision raised no considerable problem: the funds in question are now to be distributed by the three official bodies, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Medical Research Council, and the Agricultural Research Council. Since there is no such body for our studies, and no one was ready with a proposal for creating such a body, the deficiency has been made good by what appeared to be, and indeed is, the nearest existing official body, the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has provided itself with suitable machinery. It has, however, no previous experience at all closely relevant to this new function. Even if we expect, as I believe we should, that it will be satisfactorily discharged, we should still have it in our minds that this arrangement need not be permanent. It may be for the general advantage if at some future date the Ministry can hand it over to a specialized body similar to those which deal with other subjects here and with our subjects in some other countries.

These other countries also have their problems, and it would be altogether wrong to give the impression that we have no reasons for thinking ourselves in some ways exceptionally fortunate. To be able to see our national difficulties in due proportion is indeed one of the advantages of taking part in the international organizations with which I began my address.

They have many other advantages. They stand for those universal claims which are of the essence of good learning as we understand it. Of course they also have some disadvantages: they are expensive, and they move slowly, but it is a great thing that they do exist and act. Among them I believe those that have a continuous existence and definite administrative functions, such as the Union Académique Internationale, are the most valuable; but I ought also to add something in praise and appreciation of the occasional and periodical conferences and congresses in which ideas and information are exchanged about particular subjects. Now that travel is in some places and in some respects so easy and in others so difficult, these are more useful, more necessary, and perhaps harder to manage, than ever before. We may congratulate ourselves on the services which many of our Fellows render to them. Professor Edwards, our other retiring Vice-President, is representing the Academy this week at the Anglo-American Historical Conference of which he is a principal pillar. In thanking him and the Treasurer, and the Assistant Secretary and the office staff, as I have already thanked the Secretaries, for their exertions during the past year, I ought to say that our thanks are all the more sincere because we know that what they ungrudgingly give to the Academy must sometimes be grudged to us by the other associations of scholars who would fain make demands on them. And I ought to go farther, I ought to say that our thanks are due, in full measure, not only to our Officers but to the members of our Committees, not least to those of them who are not Fellows of the Academy. These Committees work hard, and they gain greatly from the knowledge and judgement of some who join us as representatives, of the Nuffield Foundation, the Museums Association, the Colonial Office, and other bodies, or simply as personal allies and friends of the common cause. Lastly we ought collectively to thank one another as individuals for all the good work done in our Council and Committees and Sections, and in this General Meeting.