

The Association of American University Presses, Inc.

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REMARKS BY THE INCOMING PRESIDENT,

Chester Kerr

Annual Meeting, May 1965

After service during the past year on the Association's newly devised Board of Directors and after taking part in this annual meeting, beginning with committee meetings all day Saturday and Sunday, I can think of nothing more than one of the favorite stories of a Kentuckian named Abraham Lincoln. I mean of course the one you all know: about the man who was being ridden out of town on a rail. Asked how he felt, he replied, "If it wasn't for the honor of the thing, I'd just as soon walk."

But the presidency of this large and exciting body, constituting as it does a vital segment of the apparatus of higher education, as well as book publishing in our country, is an honor, as well as an immense responsibility. The days of the Pure Tobacco Growers Association are far behind us-- although not, I hope the flavor and the stimulation of those times. Let us see to it that, like Camels, we remain easy on the draw.

To follow Roger Shugg in this chair will be no easy task. As Mark Carroll said of Frank Wardlaw, a tough act to follow. You have only to recall Roger's two presidential addresses, most especially the one which we listened to in this room last night. In these addresses he set a tone for our existence and our endeavors that we will do well to keep resounding in our minds and our hearts. I cannot fail to add that during the past year, when I have had the privilege of serving on his second Board, I have always found Roger Shugg unfailing in his generosity, attentive to his AAUP responsibilities despite the burdens of the Directorship of his own fine publishing house and the anxiety of illness at home, and large in his leadership. To follow him in this office -- not to mention Frank Wardlaw, Harold Ingle, August Fruge, Victor Reynolds, Lambert Davis, Tom Wilson, and Savoie Lottinville -- can only make a man feel humble.

In that mood, as well as with gratification and with pride, I accept election.

I shall enter the office with several convictions. The first is obvious: the conviction that in having fellow Board members like Bruce Denbo, Bill Harvey, Ashbel Brice, Hal Basilius, Bernard Perry, Marsh Jeanneret, Herb Bailey, and Leon Seltzer, I shall be supported and protected beyond the good fortune of most executives. I should add how much I applaud the nominating Committee's decision to broaden the base of representation to the number of nine.

I rejoice too in the new AUPS Board: the continuity for this essential service subsidiary to be provided by Curly Bowen, Bill Harvey, Jack Schulman, and Jack Goellner, and the fresh energies and talents to be brought by Roger Howley, Herb Morton, and Leon Seltzer. At the hands of this Board, I am confident, the various observations made by Bernard Perry's associate will receive the attention they deserve. And may I echo Curly Bowen's expression of gratitude to, if they will pardon the expression, the gentleman from Indiana for speaking their minds. I also share our distinguished host's view: it will be a bad day for this Association when any criticism remains unspoken or, when spoken, is denied full consideration. And let us always be hospitable to admonitions and to useful controversy, as well as mindful of the value of amenities.

From the vantage point of a seat on the Board during the past year, I am not as certain as John Dessauer that the year has been wasted--and as the parent of eight children, I would perhaps counsel him that in raising a child, the parent ought to, but seldom does, resist the temptation to give the first-born a toy railroad train at the age of ten months. Let it learn to walk first--and to distinguish between stop and go.

I rejoice too in the knowledge that the parent Board, as well as the subsidiary Board, will be backstopped by a Central Office headed by Dana Pratt-- in my view a devoted, imaginative, hard working, still-young man--one we can be proud and satisfied to have as a day-to-day link with our far-flung members as well as with the rest of the world, at home and abroad. To have him assisted at the service station by such capable car hops as Carol Franz, Curtis Damees, and the other members of the Central Office staff, is to be severally blessed.

No Boards, no paid staff, can be any better than the Committees who are willing to serve our complex organization and its needs. Therefore I rejoice, as I know you will, in being able to announce the following committee chairman appointments for the coming year:

1) The essential and continuing task of guiding our problems of Membership will remain in the hands of that remarkably wise and elderly statesman, Savoie Lottinville.

2) What will be done and in what context next year at Rutgers will be determined by an Annual Meeting Program Committee headed by Bill Sloane. It seems plain to me that any program is likely to take three days.

3) Our standing committees will be led as follows:

Library Relationships - Emily Schossberger--about time we commanded her services.

Production Quality Control - John Goetz, who helped engineer the beginnings of this fine new committee.

Scholarly Journals - Ashbel Brice

Copyright - Mark Carroll, who will bring continuity in this key area.

International Cooperation - the first internationalist of them all, Frank Wardlaw.

Latin American Translation Program - August Frugé, an architect of this program.

Nominating--the task of presenting a slate for next year's Board will be undertaken by the old Mandarin himself, Tom Wilson.

4) I also propose to establish at least three Ad Hoc Committees:

a) One of the most exciting innovations that has come out of the Shugg administration is the proposal for a series of Institutes, of which the one on Editorial matters is in your hands. I have asked Roger to head up a committee to carry forward this splendid concept--and I'm happy to say that he has agreed.

b) Yesterday's plenary session on new Printing Techniques was, for my money, an outstanding feature of the Lexington meeting. I have asked Herb Bailey to head up a committee to carry forward an investigation in this vital area--to move forward from the Underwood report, so to speak.

c) We need new publications--a basic brochure on scholarly publishing as practiced by the American university presses, for one--and so I wish to name a committee to recommend to the Board a program of institutional publications for our Association. That old pro Fon Boardman of Oxford will be asked to head up such a committee--no taxation without representation, no vote without work.

Additionally, may I report that the members of the Advisory Council appointed by Roger Shugg last year--Henry Allen Moe, William Dix, Fred Burkhardt, Pendleton Herring, Frederick Seitz, and Datus Smith--have consented to serve us another year. I noticed a number of topics in last night's presidential address that could usefully be called to the attention of this distinguished Council, for advice and guidance.

So there is my first conviction: that your new administration will be more than amply bulwarked by a remarkable range of talent and experience on its Board and Staff and Committees.

My second conviction is simply stated: without any attempt to underestimate the size and nature of the problems I shall inherit, or the new ones that are bound to rise, I remain confident that none of them are insolvable--and that they will be approached with vigor and skill and creative force by those charged with their solution. I urge those so charged to approach these problems with two tenets in mind: to remain flexible in their thinking and to act in good faith. I repeat: to remain flexible in their thinking and to act in good faith. The opinions and comments of any member will always be welcome. Let the Board hear from you.

My third conviction is also obvious: we must improve communications. Communications during the year between this Lexington meeting and the one next year at Rutgers must flow fully and freely, first from the service subsidiary, AUPS, and the Central Staff and the AAUP committees to the parent AAUP Board and from the AAUP Board to the membership. I pledge you such a flow of communications. Many of the questions raised by members in the past several months stem from lack of information, as the outgoing Board is fully aware and took notice of, in its final meeting. We have been perhaps too busy performing, instead of communicating the results of the performance. I accept the outgoing Board's belief, and make it my own, that we must henceforth communicate more successfully.

These are my convictions. When the device of a set of remarks by the incoming president, at the conclusion of the business meeting, was first

suggested it seemed clear to me that this would provide an opportunity for the new man to enunciate a noble set of aims for his administration and set forth the programs to carry out these aims.

This was a ridiculous idea, of course, for plainly it is the primary task of an incoming President of this Association to carry forward the unfinished business of our organization. Consider, if you will, the number of times in committee reports or in the business of today's meeting you encountered the phrase "referred to next year's Board for further action."

The truth is that our affairs will always remain unfinished, as is true in our Union at large--and that all your incoming Board and its officers can hope to do is to advance these affairs with all deliberate speed and through all constitutional means. We pledge you our best in that effort--and to get started I hereby convene the new Board for its first meeting at 10:30 tomorrow morning in Room 123.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Second Battle of Lexington is over--and I submit that this time the only shot that will be heard around the world is a shot of Kentucky bourbon.

Thank you.