

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, MAY 24, 1960

You have heard the excellent reports presented this morning by the chairmen of our various committees, by our treasurer, and by our executive secretary, as well as the several others who have expressed themselves constructively during the program of our business session. You are also fully acquainted with the action that has been taken as a result.

If you have drawn the conclusion, from all of this, that the affairs of the Association are in good order, that would seem to me a reasonable conclusion. The credit belongs to a great many of our members, past and present, who have had vision, and who have worked with dedication.

If you should have come to the still further conclusion that we have, as an Association, achieved a stage of respectable maturity, I think I would agree with that, too.

There are many signs of this.

We have appropriate and good standing committees, dealing competently with clear-cut, necessary assignments. During the past year -- and I daresay this is no different from any previous year -- the committees have worked freely, diligently, and effectively. They have completed their assignments with enthusiasm and imagination.

We have our Central Office, fully and ably staffed, to give full-time operational execution to committee recommendations. It is important to note that the work of our committees, as well as that of your officers, has taken on a new and greater significance, both for today and for the future, now that we have the Central Office.

Though we are not a large segment of the country's publishing industry, as measured by dollar volume of sales, the significance of our task far outstrips the sales relationships. But neither are we small.

In the last five years, from 1954 to 1959, the sales of university press books have increased from six and one-half million dollars to well over twelve million. If we add to this the very substantial portion of our business which is devoted to publications other than books, chiefly our scholarly journals, we would wind up with a figure for 1959 approaching fifteen million.

A source of pride to all of us again this year is the preponderance of university press books among the "Fifty." There were eleven this year -- four from Yale, two from Oklahoma, and one each from Southern Illinois, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago, and Harvard.

It seems reasonable to conclude, even with appropriate modesty, that scholarly publishing is now being conducted by the members of this Association on a very high professional level, and that our authors and the world of learning are being served in a highly competent manner.

These are all bits of evidence, of a sort, that we, the university publishers of America and Canada, have come of age. This fact is of interest in itself, but its real significance lies in the fact that with this stage of respectable maturity we are ready and equipped, as individual publishers and as an Association, to take on further responsibilities that are also the obligations, and to capitalize on the further opportunities that are the rewards, or that earn the rewards, of respectable maturity.

It is about this, chiefly, the obligations and the opportunities that go hand in hand with the coming of age as an Association, that I want to speak this afternoon. I will try to identify and to define what some of our obligations are, and to spell out what I believe are our principal opportunities for the future, both as individuals and in concert as an organization. In general I won't make any attempt to differentiate between what are obligations and what are the opportunities. This wouldn't really make much sense. They blend, one into the other, and their rewards are much the same.

Our Association is strong, though it can be stronger, and with our Central Office in full operation, we have laid at our own feet the opportunities, as never before, first to strengthen and expand programs currently in existence, and second to develop new programs for the future. These are obligations, too, of course, but let's try to think of them in the freer and more challenging connotation of opportunities.

I have divided them -- the opportunities -- loosely into categories:

The first category I have called "Programs for Industry Influence."

This is most important. Here is where our combined strength, if brought to bear with vigor and enthusiasm, can have great influence.

This kind of thing, this opportunity for industry influence, is best expressed in many of its aspects by whole-hearted support of the work of the American Book Publishers Council. The Council, through its Managing Director, Dan Lacy, and drawing from the strength of the majority of America's book publishers -- 37 of whom, I am glad to report, are university presses -- is fighting

the front-line battles to defeat the threat of censorship, to avoid inequities in postal rates and regulations, to strengthen the government's programs under IMG, ICA, USIA, and others. It is girding itself to play a foremost role in revision of the United States Copyright Law, now just getting under way. In respect to the latter, I will appoint a committee next year to work hand-in-hand with the Council and other industry groups on copyright revision.

The Council's co-sponsorship of National Library Week is known to all of us. Next year, as the result of action taken by the Executive Committee this year, the Association of American University Presses will be listed officially as one of NLW's sponsors. It is likely that John S. Robling, Library Week's Director, will in 1961 solicit your influence in expansion of its program through the libraries and the educational radio and television stations of your universities.

We all know, too, of the Council's vigorous efforts and tangible results (though still imperfect) in the matter of Formosan piracy. Also, we know of the Council's efforts for ratification of the Florence Agreement.

On the immediately practical level, the Council's credit service is indispensable; its insurance programs are available to any of us who can use them; its statistical survey of the industry, though quite incomplete for university presses, themselves, is of value to all of us.

These are all matters and problems of our industry on which we, as well as commercial publishers, must make our stand. If we did not have the American Book Publishers Council, then we, the Association of American University Presses, would have to go it pretty much alone.

The potential strength of our influence is great in all these matters. It comes not so much from our size as measured, for example, in dollar sales. In this respect we are not really a large segment of the publishing industry. Rather, our strength derives from other considerations -- such as our widespread geographical distribution, our solid standing as educational, non-profit publishers, and our intimate relationship with fore-most educational institutions. Our fifty or so members are located in 28 states and the District of Columbia -- as well as Canada.

From now on, Tom Schmid, as well as the Council, will keep you informed when there is legislation pending which requires our support or opposition. When your congressman is on a key committee, and always when such legislation is approaching a vote, I hope you will respond by writing your congressman or your senator with understanding and conviction.

Despite the Council's decision to increase minimum dues, I hope and I strongly urge that none of you will find this sufficient reason for withdrawal. Somehow,

I would hope, instead, that some of us who are not yet members will re-examine the feasibility of membership, both to reap some of the practical benefits of membership and to strengthen our support to the vital industry programs I have just outlined.

In addition to the American Book Publishers Council, through our Executive Secretary we now have effective liaison with many other industry organizations such as the American Booksellers Association, the National Association of College Stores, the American Library Association, the Book Manufacturers Institute, and others. Establishment of our Central Office has paved a highway for interchange of cooperation and vital information with all significant industry groups.

While we are yet on the subject of "Programs of Industry Influence," perhaps we ought to give thought, also, to what opportunities there may be to conduct some influence programs of our own, focused inwardly, upon ourselves. For example, might we prepare a handbook on the special problems and recommended systems of financial accounting and reporting, tailor-made for scholarly publishing? My thought here is that such a handbook, which would carry the endorsement of the Association, could be of real help to a university press director in convincing his fiscal officer of the special needs of publishing accounting, and thus lead to improvement of accounting relationships between the Press and its parent university. Another problem where such influence might well be brought to bear are such as the confining printing requirements under which some of our presses labor.

But I must move on.

I would like now to touch briefly on what I will call "Programs of Cooperation for More Effective Book Distribution."

It is important that we refine and expand with care the distribution of our new quarterly, Scholarly Books in America. I believe that 160,000 copies of this periodical mailed quarterly to scholars the world over is having its impact -- that the distribution of our scholarly books is increasing because of it. Following the action taken this morning, we will now appoint a separate committee to look after Scholarly Books in America.

It is vital that we pursue vigorously new methods of bringing our Educational Directory lists more closely up to date and keeping them that way. The Educational Directory is today the most up to date list of scholars available, but of course there is still room for improvement. Next year, a separate committee will also look after the Educational Directory.

We will continue to improve the Exhibits Program.

Another matter which could have substantial bearing on more effective book distribution was the appointment, last year, of a special committee on book-seller-university press relations. This committee will now become a standing committee of the Association.

One point more in regard to programs for better distribution of our books. I am standing a way out here in left field, but I hope you will permit me this moment of speculation, or as some of you will say, this moment of irresponsibility. However, I can't help but wonder if we should not give serious thought and study to the potential value of projects such as cooperation in central warehousing and wholesaling. Here I am thinking not only of such activities located within the United States but also, perhaps, in strategic book distribution centers abroad.

Now please don't misinterpret what I have just said. I have not said that I thought central warehousing and wholesaling of university press books is a good thing to do, or that any of us have decided to do it; I have only said that I believe that we should give the matter careful thought and perhaps devote to it some serious organized research.

To this next category of Association programs I have given the label "Programs of Self-Examination and Information Exchange."

Here I am thinking principally of the proposal, discussed this morning, that we cooperate in collecting, analyzing, and publishing our own industry statistics. This, I believe, is worth attempting. It seems important that we understand the relationships of income and expenses in our own industry, that we be able, each one of us, to compare our own figures with those for the Association as a whole, and that we be able to compare them with similar figures in other divisions of the book publishing industry.

A statistical survey is an obvious example of a program of self-examination and information exchange. The Manufacturing Study was a similar kind of thing, though different, of course, in several respects.

There are further opportunities, I am sure, such as in the areas of salaries and wages, and in editorial practices.

A happy condition of university publishing is the willingness of all of us to exchange information, often quite specific and frequently quite confidential information, on an informal basis.

There are opportunities for us to set up machinery for easier exchange of information between our own presses and university presses overseas, many of which are in early stages of development. In this direction, proposals have already been made and are being given careful consideration by your Executive Committee.

Finally, there are opportunities for development of new or broader scholarly publishing programs -- the kind that can be initiated only or most effectively in cooperation. A good example of this is the Latin American Translation Program which, as you know, is just getting under way.

Another example here is the five-year grant from the Ford Foundation, with which, of course, we are all familiar. It is my belief that this program has achieved admirably what it set out to achieve. It has made available significant works of scholarship which would otherwise have failed of publication. It has relieved authors of bearing the cost of publication. And most significant, it seems to me, it has encouraged authors, particularly young authors, in the greater anticipation of publication, to write and to write well enough to be accepted.

There must be other, untapped opportunities in the direction of new publishing programs of this kind.

And now, in closing -- I do promise to close quickly -- I want to thank everyone who has been so helpful and so willing to help. That includes just about everybody in this Association.

I want to express, in particular, my admiration and appreciation for the job that our "hired man," Tom Schmid and his staff have performed. Tom has taken a new and complex situation, he has gathered in many loose ends, he has surrounded a difficult task and conquered it. As a consequence I can say, confidently, that the operational business aspects of our Association are under sound management. In the year to come, the emphasis in the Central Office will be to refine, to expand, and to improve so that our cooperative business enterprises will be of greater value to all of us.

Important to note here is that Tom will travel to Germany in October to represent this Association at the Frankfurt Book Fair, visiting London and Paris enroute. Thereby, Tom will glean a store of first-hand information that will increase his value to us in many areas of foreign book distribution, such as foreign distribution of SBA, cooperative university press exhibits abroad and so forth. Tom will travel with the ABA-sponsored flight. The cost to this Association will be about \$750.

I want to emphasize, also, my gratitude to all who have worked so willingly and so effectively on committee and panel discussion assignments and, of course, my thanks to the members of the Executive Committee -- Roger, Herb, Bruce, and August -- upon whom, all of them, I have learned heavily, individually and collectively as the occasion demanded, for wisdom and good judgment.

Finally, and this is really my last word this afternoon: It's a word to Marshall, Leon, Frank, and Herb -- Herb, you'll still be aboard -- I am truly thankful that I and the Association will have the continued advice of able men. There is a great deal yet to be done.