

Advance Copy of Address of Welcome
To American Association of University Professors
By Cyrus Eaton, Industrialist and Banker; Trustee,
University of Chicago, Case Institute of Technology,
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1st Session of Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting,
Grand Ballroom, Hotel Cleveland,
10:00 a.m., Saturday, March 25, 1950

Not for publication before Saturday, March 25.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME
TO THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

The great pleasure I take in greeting you is equaled only by the high honor I feel in having the privilege of being here with you.

Cleveland is a fitting scene for the deliberations of this distinguished group of scholars. Our city is the home of such splendid schools of higher learning as Western Reserve, Case, Cleveland College, Baldwin Wallace, Fenn and John Carroll, while the State of Ohio is the home of countless other outstanding universities and colleges.

It was in Cleveland that the University of Chicago was planned and endowed by John D. Rockefeller, our leading citizen of fifty years ago. As a college student in the early years of this century, I used to work for Mr. Rockefeller during my summer vacations, and it was an exhilarating experience to hear him and President Harper discussing the problems of the youthful university. From those fascinating sessions, I carried away a never-to-be-forgotten impression of the meeting of minds that is possible between professor and businessman.

Chicago, so that I was elated to find Chancellor Hutchins' statement on academic freedom featured in the issue of your Association's Bulletin that I received this week. As an Association, you concern yourselves particularly with the advancement of the ideals and standards of your profession, and an integral part of your program must be to assure the professors of both academic freedom and economic well-being. I believe none of you will disagree with me when I say that the Administration and Trustees of the University of Chicago have consistently defended the rights of our Faculty to live and teach by their honest beliefs, and have steadfastly endeavored to provide a favorable economic climate for our Faculty.

The men and women of your profession are today's true aristocracy. Through your teaching and research, you exercise a more profound influence on our civilization than any other group. Yours, for instance, is the achievement of discovering the miracles of nuclear fission, and yours, also, is the responsibility of training the students of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow to use atomic energy constructively. The world's supply of uranium is limited, but if the unlimited supply of hydrogen is utilized destructively, man may put an end to himself, to the advantage of the other, less ferocious animals.

With the long hours that you unselfishly devote to your arduous and strenuous toil, you professors are an example to those who imagine that the good things of life can be supplied without effort. But you fail to receive the recognition that is your due because you confine your associations too much to your fellow professors, in your

had the temerity to point out in an article in your Bulletin some seven years ago, you are prone to speak and write in the specialized language of your field, so that the man in the street remains abysmally ignorant of the great work you are doing.

These barriers between you and the laymen have two unfortunate consequences. The laymen frequently feel that you are out of touch with the world of practical affairs. And you, in turn, often take the attitude that industry and commerce, agriculture and finance, are sheer materialism, unworthy of your attention.

Several years ago, I persuaded a group of professors to accompany me on a visit to a new iron ore mine. They undertook the pilgrimage with many misgivings, inasmuch as they had always thought of iron ore and the pig iron made from it as crude expressions of materialism at its lowest. Great was their surprise, and I believe their pleasure, at what they found at the scene of action. They were impressed by the industrial miracles being performed under the direction of an able group of geologists, metallurgists and engineers, and captivated by their attractive wives, most of them college women. Here was as educated and cultivated a community as could be found at a college or university.

The professors of our privately endowed institutions of learning have a very direct stake in business, whether they realize it or not. The great universities, with their vast and diversified investments, are big

business on a big scale. And the size of faculty salaries is determined by the income on those investments. Today's artificially created, low interest rates have drastically reduced investment incomes. I know some instances where they have actually been cut in half. Here is a problem in economics which the professors have a direct interest in solving.

The invasion of the universities by business men is an old story. Boards of Trustees have traditionally been dominated by industrialists and bankers. More recently there has been an influx of business men into the higher administrative offices of our colleges.

What I should now like to see is a counter-revolution that would carry the professors more actively into every sphere of practical affairs.

You already have a foothold on politics and government. It is not so many years ago since one of your colleagues occupied the White House. The bright and shining star of the present session of the Senate is our mutual friend, Professor Paul Douglas of the University of Chicago. Your members are in demand whenever a Presidential board is set up to deal with a labor dispute. A large part of the secret of your success in this field, I suspect, is your lively interest in it.

I should like to urge you to take the same interest in business so that you would be sought after to become directors of many of our nation's hundreds of thousands of corporations. The economics department and business school could provide able directors for banks and insurance companies. The transportation companies and the public utilities would profit from the counsel of the sociologists. The publishing and publicity fields badly need the uplifting influence of the

English department. Every other line of business could similarly benefit by drawing on the appropriate college department for a director. The gain to business would be matched by the increase in experience and usefulness of the professors.

My plea to you, therefore, is to abandon the ivory tower for the arena of practical affairs. Speak the language of the people. Let all segments of society have the benefit of both your specialized knowledge and your common sense.