

door J. Kraayenhof

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, my dear colleagues,

Being the second speaker invited to respond to your kind words of welcome, I believe that nobody will expect me to try to surpass Sir Harold Howitt on his excellent speech in the name of all guests from abroad.

It is therefore that I will restrict myself to a few remarks in general terms.

But, in the first place I want to refer to the 75-years' jubilee of our host, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. While being without any authorization I do not hesitate to feel myself the representative of all participants from abroad in expressing a respectful word of tribute and congratulation to the American Institute, for its excellent work in the field of accounting, not only for this country, but also for the benefit of many other countries of the free world. May I invite all guests in this room to rise and join together in a warm applause to you, Mr. President, as this week's exponent of the A.I.C.P.A., in the country which we - as representatives of free countries - still believe to be and sincerely hope to remain the mightiest country of the world, in spirit and by this in power.

1952, London, our colleagues in Great Britain and Ireland deserve our lasting gratitude for their wisdom and courage to organize this post-war international congress in our field. It was a very good restart of the series of our meetings.

1957, in Amsterdam, we undoubtedly came closer together, favoured by the more moderate dimensions of the hostess-town. My Dutch colleagues and I are still much impressed by the signs of friendship and co-operation that are shown to us by so many colleagues and their wives. I am convinced, Mr. President, that you and your committee-members will receive the same enjoyable dividends out of your invested time and devotion.

There was a considerable and encouraging increase, from the 1st to the 2nd post-war congress, in the number of visitors from abroad: London had about 860, Amsterdam 1.650, both figures including the ladies. Here in New York, I understand there are between 2.200 and 2.300 visitors from countries other than the U.S. This is a clear indication that the need for international contacts is strongly felt in our profession.

Both earlier congresses enjoyed a gratifying interest from the participants for the business-sessions; the social parts of the programmes gave much satisfaction and stimulated the human relationship between many accountants throughout the world.

However, the critical question can be put as to the actual results in the professional field of the great efforts of the sponsoring bodies and the high sacrifices of the participants, both in time and in money. As there is no international information centre on professional occurrences, this question cannot be answered easily. But looking around the world I feel myself inclined to say that I am not at all pessimistic.

Apart from an important and fruitful growth in individual international contacts, I find a still scarce but increasing number of contributions from authors from other countries to the national professional journals, and more lectures given by speakers from abroad.

* Beantwoording van het welkomstwoord van de president van het achtste internationale accountantscongres.

Besides, on this side of the Atlantic Ocean there are already regular Inter-American conferences, as there will be one after our congress. In the Far East, congresses are held by the Asian and Australian accountancy bodies, and last but not least - said by me as a European, with proper modesty - next year September the first all-European congress will be organized, in Edinburgh, Scotland, the place of the cradle of the organized accountants-profession of our part in world history. Undoubtedly the international congresses have largely contributed to prepare the ground for this event, which, to my opinion, can be of historical value for the development of the profession in Europe.

Progress is surely being made, but world events move so rapidly that we must make even faster progress to meet our professional responsibilities fully. In my opinion there are three crucial areas in which international co-operation is needed: *point 1*, on the education, training and examination, which must be seen of the greatest importance in connection with the steady increase of the profession's international scope. It is therefore with great approval and pleasure, that I learned of the international group that will come together on the subject of accounting education, next week at the University of Illinois.

point 2, on the desirable uniformity in accounting principles, and the to this end necessary systematic international research on the differences and their significance, in order to investigate the possibility of developing a broad set of accepted principles and their meaning. I am happy to learn that serious consideration is being given this problem by the American Institute's Committee on Long-range Objectives.

point 3, on the necessary uniformity of auditing standards and procedures; while increasing international contacts have made a start to come to one philosophy and similar standards, many differences remain. Here too an organized, systematic approach would speed up progress.

It is my feeling that we should sincerely consider whether to these respects, our often repeated excuse for the diverging standpoints, that our profession is still a young one, henceforth can be used.

As to the acceptability and the use of accounting principles we share the responsibility with management, which even has the primary responsibility for the choice. But in respect to auditing standards and procedures, we, as auditors of profession, are the sole experts and therefore the sole to be held responsible. It is up to us to eliminate the divergencies in the various countries of the world.

It is, Mr. President, an enjoyable fact that the present congress, in its broad subject on accounting and auditing in the world, invites a conscientious study of and an open discussion on the differences on both my points 2 and 3. The great number of technical papers to be presented here will undoubtedly contribute much to our understanding of present practices throughout the world. May I express the sincere hope that internationally co-ordinated research, study and discussion may soon be organized. If the discussions here should encourage such a step this Congress, with its overwhelming attendance, will be seen as a landmark in the march towards more uniformity in the accounting field.

Concluding, may I, Mr. President, to this end urge all participants of this Congress to co-operate by giving their best efforts for the success of both the business-meetings and the social events, in an atmosphere of good friendship.