

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

AT THE opening session on Tuesday morning, 8th June, Mr. Richard CARLINE, Chairman of the United Kingdom National Committee, welcomed the delegates representing nearly thirty countries: "This is a great event for us because it is the first time we have had such a gathering of artists from all over the world assembled for a conference here in London. I think it is the first time that artists from so many parts of the world have come together to discuss the subject of art teaching." There were, however, several National Committees which had written regretting their unavoidable absence. He particularly regretted the absence through illness of the President of the Association, Mr. Titus LEESER, who "supported the plan to hold a Conference on the subject of art teaching and our wish to hold it in London." He welcomed Mr. Marko ČELEBONVIĆ of Yugoslavia, Vice-President of the Association, Mr. Yoshinobu MASUDA of Japan, Deputy Vice-President and Mr. Berto LARDERA, Secretary General.

The Chairman expressed gratitude and appreciation to all those organizations and individuals whose advice or financial help had made this Conference possible; these included, among other organizations, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Inner London Education Authority, the Surrey County Council Education Department, the British Council, the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Department of Education and Science.

In asking Miss Jennie LEE, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Department of Education and Science, to open the Conference, he referred to the valuable work she was doing for artists. In welcoming the delegates to the Conference, Miss LEE said, "Believe me, you are received in this City of London very warmly; we hope you will enjoy it," and continuing: "What surely is true is that the great refreshment for mankind, the new beginnings of mankind, the excitement and let us hope, the friendships of mankind, are all deeply rooted in the arts. The Government is "trying, even in a difficult financial situation, to give the arts in Great Britain a higher priority than they have ever had in the past; we are accepting the fact that governments—local, regional, national, and international,—have to contribute much more than they have done in the past; that we are not living in a world where you can depend entirely on the great patron. We need all the help and value from trusts and private patrons." She also added the point that, "the present Prime Minister is the first in the history of this country who has asked one of his colleagues to take special responsibility for the arts."

Mr. ČELEBONVIĆ, the Acting President of the Association, thanked Miss Lee for sparing the time "to tell us such vivid and sympathetic things" and also "the delegates who have come from so far and represent so many different systems of schools." He referred to the beginnings of the Association and then spoke of the great interest of Yugoslavia in the theme of the Conference, saying, "I know that my Yugoslav colleagues have thought about the same problem already and they are very anxious to join in; that is why you have such a great Yugoslav representation. I would like to emphasize how the theme of this meeting is important. There is a big question about how art has to be taught at this moment. Now there is a turning point in history regarding this problem. There was a tradition that art was taught one way; now, with the revolution in painting, sculpture and engraving, new aspects have emerged, and some of the students themselves do not know why they go to school, except to meet fellow artists; and the professors themselves are sometimes in doubt. I think it is absolutely essential to exchange opinions about these matters."