Introduction

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A GENERATION ago no one seriously doubted that science, a manifestation of the highest qualities of the human spirit, was one of the most fertile sources of material and spiritual benefits. It is true that the spread of scientific knowledge among the people always encountered strong resistance from the devotees of mysticism and superstition, and from those whose profits and privileges depended on the timid ignorance of the beings they dominated. In spite of early difficulties and injustices due to the misuse of scientific progress the faith of the people in science continued to grow steadily.

The events of the last fifty years have noticeably modified this general attitude. More and more frequently since the end of the last century anxiety and distress have been expressed about some of the evil results of science. Some people even go so far as to question the value of science as a factor in civilization. Recent events concerning the atom bomb have increased still more the state of confusion both in the minds of the scientists themselves and in the general attitude towards science.

It seems to me that before passing judgment it is necessary to distinguish between pure scientific knowledge and the uses to which it is put. In short, to distinguish, in science, between thought and action.

Pure scientific knowledge brings peace to our spirits and a firm faith in the ascent of man by casting out superstition and the fear of invisible forces, and by giving us a more and more clear understanding of our place in the universe. *Science is besides, and it is one of her proudest tilles, a fundamental element in the unity of the thoughts of man all over the world.* For all these reasons science has in itself an undeniable moral value and has an exalted part in social affairs.

Until the last few years the results of fundamental research became, through the free diffusion of scientific information, the common property of the scientists and technicians of the whole world. Thus, world solidarity and mutual aid were established in this field. Every attempt to limit the freedom of fundamental research is an obvious danger to the development of science and civilization. We have already, unfortunately, had an example of this kind of limitation in the field of nuclear physics. The opposing of such a tendency has become one of the duties of a scientist.

Science is sometimes considered as moral or immoral in itself, according to the applications which are made of it. Most discoveries and inventions indeed do present a double aspect, beneficient as well as destructive, and it is the men who use them who alone may be judged. It is not worth while to recall here the most notorious examples of the abuses of science. It cannot be denied that the difficulties of our time are, to a very large extent, their consequence. But it is equally true to realize that we might have been the victims (and how defenceless) of

other and doubtless still more tragic difficulties, if science had *not* progressed. Many scientists rightly think that the abuses of science can be prevented: they do not wish to be the accomplices of those whom a bad organization of society permits to exploit the results of their labours for selfish and harmful ends. It is undeniable that a fit of conscience has seized the scientific world and that the scientists' sense of social responsibility is growing and becoming more defined every day. Scientists and technicians do not and cannot belong to an intellectual aristocracy detached from practical affairs. They must necessarily, as citizen members of the great community of workers, take an active interest in the uses which society makes of their discoveries and inventions in order to assure a full utilization of science in the service of peace and the well-being of humanity.

I have tried in this preamble to recall some of the tasks, which among many others are incumbent on scientists and technicians, seem to me to be essential.

It is towards the achievement of just these tasks, which are of service to science and to the adaptation of our external surroundings to the new conditions which science creates, that the national associations of scientific workers have already been striving successfully.

Of their many common interests some of the most important go beyond national boundaries and fully justify their federation on a world scale.

It was by the unanimous agreement of all the delegates who met at the London Congress that it was decided to create the World Federation of Scientific Workers, on the motion of the British Association of Scientific Workers.

The Federation's aims and activities are clearly defined in the constitution which appears in the pages of this pamphlet. It will be able to make a most useful contribution to the solution of vast and urgent problems such as those concerning atomic energy, the re-establishment of scientific life in devastated countries, nutrition, agriculture, world scientific co-ordination, etc.

I am convinced that the new Federation should be able to unite for the general good all the scientific organizations which accept its statutes and are willing to work in conformity with its aims.

In the grave and difficult times in which we live, where events by their hugeness and complexity seem sometimes to be beyond the grasp of the human intellect, the creation of the World Federation of Scientific Workers, binding together tens of thousands of scientists and technicians animated by the same wish for peace and happiness, should give us new and strong ground for hope.