

## ☆ EDITORIAL ☆

### *Report of the Retiring President, International Society for General Semantics: 1950-1953*

IT IS with a modest measure of satisfaction that I retire from the office to which you generously elevated me in 1950. To the new incumbent, my close friend, Professor Anatol Rapoport, I extend my heartiest felicitations.

Perhaps the most welcome piece of information I can now give is the news that, despite occasional scoffers and the disquieting activities of that earnest but lunatic fringe which plagues every new proposition for dealing with the problems of the world, general semantics has enjoyed during the past three years a steady spread of influence in all circles—the arts and sciences, education, philosophy, the humanities, and the everyday pursuits of the man in the street. Its aims, messages, and technics are ever more frequently quoted in the daily press and in public places. Not least important is our awareness that general semantics has slowly won the respect of many who were at an earlier time suspicious that ours is but another messianic cult. Applications of general semantic principles are now being made in military circles, on police forces, in progressive business enterprises of many varieties, and wherever communication is recognized as integral to the sane conduct of human affairs. Courses in general semantics for the public are steadily increasing in number.

This gratifying circumstance is in part reflected by our roster of ISGS members. There are now 1,673 paid-up members distributed over the face of the earth—a new high for the Society—and there are 881 subscribers to our journal, *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*. Some 300 foreign libraries now receive *ETC.* and from this source alone we have had a welcome influx of new members and new subscribers from abroad.

MEANWHILE, the financial stability of the Society has been improved. Although still precarious, our financial status has for the first time in its history been transferred from the red to the black side of the ledger. This is owing to the skill and untiring efforts at economy exhibited by the executive secretary, Jean Taylor, and the membership secretary, Evelyn Rochetto, with the counsel and assistance of the secretary-treasurer, Karl Hauch. To all of them I express deep gratitude for the courage they have shown in the face of persistent personal deprivation and for their patience and ingenuity.

The spiraling of operating costs and the expansion of services rendered by the central office in Chicago, not only to individual members and chapters of the Society but to the ever-increasing number of non-members interested in general

semantics, necessitated in 1952 an increase in minimal membership dues. Though small, this increase was reluctantly implemented by the Governing Board.

THE FIRST Conference on General Semantics, a three-day affair, was held on the University of Chicago campus June 21-23, 1951. Scientific papers on methodology and experimental subjects were read by scholars and other participants from representative walks of life. In addition, two general discussion groups were held. A Society business meeting, open to the public, concluded the meeting. Reports received from a number of those registered indicated enthusiastic satisfaction with the program. A committee is now at work planning a second general semantics conference for 1954 under the sponsorship of Washington University in St. Louis.

DIRECTOR M. Kendig of the Institute of General Semantics and I have had two extended conferences concerning the roles that might most advantageously be played in the future by the Institute at Lakeville, Connecticut, and the International Society. We intend to continue these, assisted by others who have played an active role in the development and propagation of general semantics during the past decade.

OUR OFFICIAL journal, *ETC.*, which has now completed ten years of publication, has flourished gratifyingly under the expert guidance of Editors Hayakawa, Rapoport, and Smith. Several of the recent issues (e.g., that devoted to metalinguistics) have marked new "highs" in the history of a journal which has already earned an enviable respect in scholarly circles. The difficulties of editing such a journal and of maintaining high standards are enormous. Among other things required are countless hours of heavy spade work, much editorial skill, the possession of a large fund of general information, the ability to suppress one's own "irrational prejudices," and an abundance of tact. That our staff possesses such attributes is cause for rejoicing. May they long continue with us!

FINALLY, grateful thanks are owing to all those who have contributed in small and great ways to the conduct of affairs which underlie and make possible the more manifest activities of a Society such as ours. Mr. George Taylor and Mr. Albert McKee especially have given generously of their time and technical know-how. To the Governing Board, the elected members of which are required to sacrifice much of their already burdened time and to travel long distances at their own expense to attend several meetings a year, I wish especially to express my gratitude. For the intelligent help, industry, and initiative exhibited above and beyond the call of duty by Jean Taylor, I can only say that I could hardly have functioned without her.

RUSSELL MEYERS, M.D., *President, 1950-53*