

Introduction

The Reverend Frank Fadner, S. J., Regent of the School of Foreign Service, made the following welcoming remarks:

Language is man's most primitive means of communication. And I don't suppose I exaggerate when I say that today, more than ever before in the world's history, there is greater need for *effective* communication among the peoples of this planet. If we are to have peace in our time, the rapid exchange of scientific data, the complete sharing of ideas by all the members of the polyglot human family is absolutely essential.

And yet, as you know — almost by way of vindicating the notion that human history is a record of action and reaction — in proportion as the need for international communication in the scientific world has grown, an obstacle that hinders and hamstring such necessary exchange has presented itself to block the realization of one world of ideas. This is the blighting spirit of overweening nationalism — a form of provincial pride that glorifies the traditions and heritage of a given local bailiwick to the disastrous disadvantage of effective human communication. Thus, for example, quantities of scientific articles produced in the Russian world — works, which in another, more *internationally* minded age would have seen the light of day in the French or German languages — now hit a waiting world in the Russian language, and in most instances must undergo the laborious process of translation into the more commonly known world tongues. The day of *Latin* as an international *Lingua Franca* of the scientific world has long since passed.

In the latter days of the past century — as this deterioration and general breakdown became more and more noteworthy, certain linguistic pioneers sought to bridge the gap. Father Johann Schleyer invented *Volapük*, in the 1870's; Louis Lazarus Zamenhof created *Esperanto* in the 1890's. Other attempts were subsequently made. These somewhat unrealistic efforts to educe an artificial means of international communication have met with but indifferent success.

We are now living in a distinctly mechanical age, and it is natural that we should seek to solve the problem by trying the means at hand. It is, I think, a source of justifiable pride that in the last half-dozen years these halls at Georgetown University's Institute of Languages and Linguistics have been the scene of much serious and painstaking effort — much conscientious experimentation — in the direction of making the dream of mechanical translation come true.

And that is why this particular Eighth Round Table meeting, which we are sponsoring — and which is devoted entirely to this timely and intriguing subject, is a fitting postlude to those efforts. That is why, too, as Regent of the School of Foreign Service I take extreme personal pleasure in welcoming you to these discussions. I assure you that it is the sincere and earnest intention of your hosts — the Administration and Faculty of the Institute of Languages and Linguistics of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service — to wish you Godspeed and profit in the discussion of the subjects before you. The upshot cannot fail to be at least one more step on the way to a striking realization of the brotherhood of man.