

WELCOME BY DR. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

Ladies and Gentlemen: It is with great pleasure that I declare this Forty-Third Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund, a Round Table on Demographic Aspects of the Black Community, in session.

My task is a very simple and brief one, to welcome you here to discuss this important topic. It is a pleasant task for me not only because my first public appearance for the Fund was in this room to welcome one of these round table conferences in 1962. It is also a pleasure because of the particularly impressive role that this long series of round tables on demography has played in the evolution and development of that science. It is largely due to the work of many people associated over the years with the Fund, many of whom are present, that demography has come to be such a key science in the world at the present time.

I think we should remember not only the value that a meeting of this kind has in itself, but also the tremendous benefit that has accrued from the publication of the proceedings of such meetings.

Throughout the long history of these conferences, one person has been central to them, and that is Clyde Kiser. He has been involved from their inception as a helper and colleague of Frank Notestein's and later as the central prime mover in their development and their evolution; in seeing them through to publication, and ensuring that their influence is felt all over the world where people think and talk about problems of population. It is, therefore, especially appropriate that this year, when he has become a Vice President of the Fund, and while he is chairman of the Technical Committee of the Fund, that he should also be Chairman of the Conference.

These forty-three conferences, as you may not know, have had only a few active chairmen in their whole history. The Fund is very sparing about its senior personnel; it has had only four Executive Directors and it has only really had six conference chairmen of the round tables on population, including Frank Notestein himself on several occasions, Robert E. Chaddock, Professor of Statistics at Columbia, from 1932 to 1940; Frederick Osborn in 1938 and in 1965; Winfield Riefler in 1947; Hugo Behm of Chile in 1967, and for no less than 25 years, Lowell J. Reed, whom so many of us not only in demography but in public health, statistics and epidemiology, knew well.

Having known and worked with Clyde very closely for more than seven years, I know that he is a very worthy person in that particular succession of distinguished figures.

Clyde, it is a real joy to see you presiding in person over what has become one of the most distinguished conferences held on the subject of demography.