ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

By Dr. W. W. CAMPBELL

PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. Minister of Norway,
Members of the National Academy and esteemed Guests:

With one exception the several speakers of this evening will be formally introduced, and you will observe that their addresses fit into a logical plan. It will make me feel better if I exercise the privilege of telling you that I, as the one exception, am making an address at the request of the academy's council, and not upon my own initiative.

The academy's dinner of each year is attended for the first time by many of its recently elected members. It is a safe guess that those new members have an incomplete understanding of the historic reason for the academy's creation and existence. It was in the middle year of our great war between the states, the year 1863, that the United States Government, feeling the need for a definite and responsible organization of the scientists of the nation to which it could go at any time for information and advice on scientific subjects, incorporated and constituted the National Academy of Sciences, by a special Act of Congress. This act, in effect the charter of the academy, is a remarkable document; remarkable in its brevity, its clarity and in my opinion its wisdom.

The first paragraph of the congressional act consists of the statement that fifty American scientists whose names are recorded in alphabetical order, beginning appropriately with Louis Agassiz, of Harvard, on the Atlantic coast, and ending with "J. D. Whitney, California; their associates and successors