

# SCIENCE

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## THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES<sup>1</sup>

### ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT<sup>2</sup>

THE academy has adhered very consistently since its incorporation to the principle that the primary consideration for membership is convincing evidence, by scholarly character and productiveness, of devotion to the fundamental principles of science and the scientific way of knowledge, which are the sources of the discoveries and inventions that have transformed the social and economic conditions of modern life. There is no danger that we should depart from these principles. But it should be widely known that we fully recognize the social, economic and national responsibilities that rest upon us, and that we are making every effort to discharge these responsibilities. The academy occupies a very special position of responsibility in the relations between science and public affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Meeting in Washington, D. C., April 24, 25 and 26, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Given at the annual dinner for the presentation of medals, April 25.

The academy itself is a small body compared with the great body of professional scientific men in the universities and colleges, in the schools of technology and medicine, in the engineering profession and in medicine, in the research institutes, in government service and in the industrial research laboratories of the country. The academy took a great step forward in the way of wider representation when it organized the National Research Council in 1916 at the request of President Wilson. This body is defined legally as an agency of the academy, but it is much more than that in practice: it is a sister body, possessing a large measure of independence, with which the academy cooperates harmoniously and whole-heartedly in the carrying out of our public relations.

We are bound together most closely not only in administrative ways, but also in spirit and purpose. The overlapping membership is numerous, but the National Research Council has much greater latitude than the

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