



FREDERIC BERNARD BOLTON, M.C.

FREDERIC BERNARD BOLTON, M.C.

Mr. Bolton was educated at Rugby School and joined The Bolton Steam Shipping Company Ltd. under the Chairmanship of his father in 1940. During the last war, he served, attaining the rank of Major, with the Welsh Guards in North Africa and Italy and was decorated with the Military Cross in Italy in 1945. From 1951–1956 he served to the rank of Major with the Northamptonshire Yeomanry. In 1945 he was elected a member of Lloyd's and in 1946 a member of the Baltic Exchange.

He was appointed a director of The Bolton Steam Shipping Company Ltd., and subsidiaries, and a director of F. Bolton and Company Ltd., now F. Bolton and Company (Holdings) Ltd., and its subsidiaries in 1946. On the death of his father in 1953 he succeeded to the Chairmanship of both companies.

In 1958 he became a director of Atlantic Steam Navigation Company Ltd., and subsidiaries, and was appointed Chairman of the company in 1960.

1963 saw him appointed as a director of Associated Humber Lines Ltd. of which, since 1967, he has also been Chairman.

He is a director of BP Tankers Ltd.

Mr. Bolton holds a number of public positions and appointments. He is a member of the Board of the Port of London Authority, a member of the Council of the Chamber of Shipping and is Chairman of the Technical Policy Committee, and is on a number of its other Committees. He is a member of the General Committee of Lloyd's Register of Shipping and Chairman of the Shipowners' Committee of the British Ship Research Association and, in 1967, became a member of the National Ports Council and in 1969, a member of the Advisory Committee for Shipbuilding and Shipping under the Ministry of Technology.

Mr. Bolton is a Past President of the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, a Past Chairman of the Deep Sea Tramp Section of the Chamber and of the London Deep Sea Tramp Shipowners' Association.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

of

FREDERIC BERNARD BOLTON, M.C.

I am not sure what precedent there is for a man to give two Presidential Addresses to the Institute. I think it is a very good idea, and I would urge the Council to see if they can arrange to have it done more often. It is good because when Presidents of this Institute are selected as they so often are, the Presidential Address is given by somebody who is with the Institute but not of it. I would hesitate to say I was "of it" now, but I am much more "of it" than I was in April 1968.

In April 1968 all I could do was to give some impression of what I, as a shipowner, thought about the marine engineers, and what I imagined the Institute stood for. Ever since, I have found that the one really important thing was to try to define clearly what the Institute objectives were, and to make sure (insofar as it is a President's duty and responsibility to do so) that what was happening in the Institute was consistent with these objectives. A lot of administration has to be done in any organization: its governing body has to spend a lot of time debating details of interior economy, so much so that unless there is a continuous murmur of why? why? in the back of the mind, it is easy to lapse into an "administration for administration's sake" frame of mind.

What then have I determined as our objectives? I would say they are to achieve the highest possible standard of performance by engineers—and because we are the marine institute, particularly marine engineers. To this end, we have got to try to improve the status of the engineers, technologist and technicians—to improve the attractiveness of the profession to the abler sections of those working through the educational stream. And when once they are committed to an engineering career, to assist them to become better engineers by the dissemination of technical information, in our role as a learned society.

I have been talking, as you may have noted, on the broad front of engineering rather than in marine terms, narrowly. This is because, although we represent the marine engineers, our function is not competitive with the other engineering institutions but complementary with them, for the greater glory of the engineering profession as a whole. Of course there are rivalries, and areas of overlap, but in the long run these are, or must be made to be, of less significance than the good of the whole. We should all, surely, be specialists within a common field, and not deadly enemies, determined to do each other down at all costs. C.E.I. was, I am sure, formed precisely to this end, and one of the things I have noted in the last 18 months is the considerable amount of co-operation and collaboration between institutions that association through C.E.I. has brought about.

It is likely that you will consider my definition of the Institute's objectives a crashing platitude. So perhaps it is.

But it is, in my view, vitally necessary to have it, platitude or not, at the top of one's mind, because there are other magnetic forces working which can draw us from the proper course, and it is necessary to be continually alive to the need for appropriate corrections. Our object is not solely for the good of our Institute only with size, power or triumph over other institutes our aim. Thus the success of IMAS should be measured not in any edge it gave us (if it did) over anyone else, but because the subjects discussed improved the knowledge or stimulated the thought processes of marine engineers to enable them to do an even better job. Equally, our object is not to further the interests of individual members. We have not got a role in industrial relations: we are not concerned to provide higher pay or better career prospects for individual marine engineers. In fact, it is even possible that our true objective, of maximizing the standards of marine engineering as a whole, could sometimes appear to be inimical to the interests of individuals. This makes life a little tricky because whatever else—as I have said elsewhere—the Institute belongs to its members, and not to the Council, or office bearers, and they can only act if they succeed in convincing the members that the objectives to which they are working are correct, and that their actions in pursuit of these objectives are in accordance with the wishes of the membership.

But would it really be in the interest of a higher standard of marine engineering throughout the world if we allowed the Institute to drop out of C.E.I., because we insisted on maintaining for our membership rights which C.E.I. only considered appropriate to men with higher qualifications than our members? Would it be right so to arrange matters that the Chartered Engineer qualification was not available to the marine engineer—which would remove marine expertise from the body corporate of Chartered Engineers as a whole—just because many of our members had only the lower qualifications? And would it be possible to maintain our responsibility for standards, and, indeed, hold on to what successes we have achieved in other directions, if we so altered our Constitution to become closely involved in the pay and conditions of employment of our members? These are the sort of areas in which pursuit of our real objectives may appear to be at variance with the personal interests of some of our members.

In my first Presidential Address I had some fairly ill-informed comments to make on our role as a learned society. Consistent with the objectives I have set out we strive to produce high quality technical papers to be read and discussed, and published for the increase in knowledge of all. IMAS gave us the opportunity, which we are taking, of publishing a wealth of material, and ideas that IMAS should be repeated regularly, if on a smaller scale, will enable us to

Presidential Address

do so again, often. But what happens to what is published? How much of what is said falls upon the ambient air and is never translated into further action? Can we, and ought we not to, assume some responsibility for follow through? I said, last year, that perhaps in some ways the role of the learned societies was being overtaken by the research associations but that in any event it seemed to me that there should be a better channel of communication of what had been thought through to those whose responsibility it is to organize a worthwhile research effort. This was, I see now, a misreading of the role of the learned society as it is. But whatever it is and perhaps historically it has been, what should or could it be? I really do not know how you organize a follow-through effort. I am sure it would drive the wretched Papers Committee demented if they were required to report on the effects after presentation of each paper. Something on the lines of a TAM rating would only measure the number of people who have heard or read the paper and it would require a real market survey effort to go beyond that and measure what action was taken as a result of it. A system whereby no membership would be continued into a new year unless the member put in with his subscription a completed questionnaire as to what he had made of each paper circulated in *TRANSACTIONS*—with nil returns properly rendered as well of course—would probably reduce our membership to zero, or, through sheer frustration, dry up the source of future papers entirely. Would it not be possible, however, to assume a responsibility for seeing that wherever possible some future action was taken about the papers, so that to have a paper accepted for presentation by the Institute was not only something in itself, but a stepping stone to a wider acceptance or adoption of the ideas embodied in it.

I have said before that what the country needs is to find out what really makes a man work or not work. Somebody has just written a paper saying that Britain will not be in the super power class by 1980, but will by then rank with Canada, India and Italy, and suggests that the causes are well summarized by the Tory election slogan of the 1950's

“you've never had it so good”. He argues that in fact this is true, and despite the much publicized economic troubles of the country over the last 20 years it is difficult to find people here who are in any real sense worse off than they were at the beginning of the period. What we have lost, what has been used up to achieve this, are the resources, effort, will, and indeed desire to effect anything outside these shores. Is this not to say that we have settled for working for our own personal requirements, and lost the self respect which would give us the strength and confidence to wish to influence others: if we can satisfy our own requirements with less than a 100 per cent effort we will do so, and have no incentive to put ourselves out any further for anyone else?

If anyone can find out how to restore our national self-respect, as de Gaulle did for France, he will surely deserve more of his country than anyone else. But what is true nationally is also true parochially. Our job, as an Institute, is to maintain and increase the self-respect of marine engineers to the point where the best standard of marine engineering possible is not good enough, and where the interests of the individual and of the Institute itself are subordinate to that end.

I am, unusually I think, delivering this address not only in respect of a second year of office but mid-term in that second year. It is not therefore entirely appropriate for me to thank you for electing me—or to be precise thank the Council for asking me to fill the casual vacancy caused by the inability of Mr. Munton, the Elected President, to take office—nor for me to thank you as at the conclusion of my term, as I shall get an opportunity to do that at the Annual General Meeting next year. What I can, and should, do is to say that while I was conscious of the honour you did me when you elected me in 1968, I now know sufficiently more of the Institute's affairs to be more aware of the honour, and I am very grateful to the Council for giving me the opportunity of serving the Institute for the longer period.