

Dinner in Senate Hall for Visiting Munich Professors

on Friday, 29th May, 1959

It is a great pleasure to welcome our Munich colleagues - safe and sound after their travels,, all eight of them - back again in Edinburgh. Though, alas, and I hate to mention it, this is the last occasion of any formality when we shall all be together. But we did want an opportunity of telling our guests how much their visit has meant to us; and that is what this dinner is intended to be. Your visit is, of course, a gesture of friendship. But it is really more even than that. It is, I submit, an open demonstration of the essential unity of scholarship, of our joint membership of one world-wide commonwealth of learning.

And I hope that you have found, as we certainly have, that our academic association has led immediately to sympathy and understanding. For among the many valuable features of your visit here I would single out for special mention first of all your lectures and, second, our academic conversations in twos and threes. These have certainly been for us periods of pleasure and profit - as we hope they've been for you.

Now it may appear most uncivil of me to tell our guests what we have found them to be as a result of these conversations. And yet I'm going to dare to do so. But I'm going to preface what I have to say in that regard by a story. It's a story about one of our most famous Professors, Professor Blackie, the Professor of Greek. On one occasion he was visited by an Englishman who spent quite a few hours in his company during which time their conversation touched on many, many topics. The Englishman afterwards told some friends about the conversation, expressing his deep admiration for the vast knowledge of Professor Blackie on so many subjects. "But", added the Englishman, "what a pity he doesn't seem to know Greek".

Well, during our conversations with our Munich colleagues I've been more than once reminded of the story about Professor Blackie. You all wear your specialised learning lightly. Now a moment ago I mentioned the work of Professor Röntgen, work in physics which has had the most profound effect in medical diagnosis. His work is, I would say, the best example anyone can