

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL

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EDITORIAL

THE Oslo Conference, of which a report appears in the following pages, was attended by some 130 members—among them a number of newcomers—from 21 countries.* Throughout the Conference one was sensible of a closer degree of integration than had prevailed on many previous occasions. This was in part due to a stricter adherence by the speakers to the subjects that had been laid down for discussion, but perhaps even more to the sense of common purpose and understanding which is gradually being developed amongst the members of the Council. Moreover, the Festival performances, which attracted many thousands of spectators, were not only a source of enjoyment and exhilaration, but gave point and substance to the Conference proceedings. In addition, the Radio Commission, which derived great assistance from Norsk Rikskringkasting, was a valuable feature of the Conference. It demonstrated anew the important part that broadcasting is playing both in the preservation and dissemination of folk music.

The thanks of the Council to its Norwegian hosts are recorded on another page of this *Journal* and in the *Bulletin*, but it is fitting that mention should here be made of Dr. O. M. Sandvik, our dearly loved Vice-President, who by his work for the Conference has added yet another contribution to his life-long service to folk music.

One of the most important steps taken by the Council has been the adoption of the resolution concerning the preservation of folk music, which reads as follows:—

THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL, ASSEMBLED AT
OSLO ON THE 30TH DAY OF JUNE, 1955:

BEING GRAVELY CONCERNED at the rapid disappearance of traditional songs, dances and instrumental music which is taking place in most countries of the world as a consequence of the sudden break in the continuity of the lives of those who have hitherto been the bearers of the tradition:

CONSIDERING that the rapid extension of education, the incursions of industrialism, and, above all, the spread of commercialised mechanical music are superimposing an alien culture on traditional modes of artistic expression; and that the present decline in the traditional practice of folk music arises not from unprejudiced choice but from the loss of confidence engendered by the unaccustomed ways of modern life;

* Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (West and East), Iceland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and Yugoslavia.

BEING CONVINCED that folk music has a unique value in the life of to-day as (a) being in itself a complete and satisfying form of artistic expression as well as a basis for further musical development, (b) playing an important part in the scientific and historical study of the art of music and in the sociological study of mankind, and (c) forming a bond of union between the peoples of all countries at all levels of culture;

BELIEVING that, while our modern civilisation is destroying folk music, it also has the power to revitalise it and to save it for posterity by means of mechanical recording and filming, provided that the work be done forthwith in the spirit of the injunction, "*Colligite quæ superaverunt, ne pereant*":

HAVE RESOLVED to bring to the notice of governments, Unesco and other authoritative bodies the urgency and importance of preserving the folk music of their own countries: to suggest (1) that they should take immediate steps to ensure the recording and filming, under expert guidance, of all extant authentic folk music, and (2) that they should treat the preservation and encouragement of folk culture as an indispensable adjunct to any campaign that may be undertaken against illiteracy.

This resolution has been sent to Unesco and to all the governments of the world together with the request that the Council may be informed of any steps that are being taken to implement the resolution. Members who are in a position to do so are urgently asked to give publicity to the resolution and to persuade those in authority to act upon it.* Following on the information we receive we hope to assist still further in the exchange of records by institutions, thus meeting one of the most urgent needs in the comparative study of folk music.

An immediate step which the Council is taking towards promoting the comparative study of folk music is the appointment of a small commission of experts which will concern itself with this aspect of the subject. The Commission will meet next summer under the scientific direction of Professor Dr. Walter Wiora at Freiburg-in-Breisgau, Germany, at the invitation of the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv. The meeting will precede the Annual Conference, which is to be held at Trossingen and Stuttgart (see p. 57).

* Copies of the resolution can be obtained from the Secretary, IFMC.