Kirtley F. Mather: President Elect, AAAS

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IN THE SELECTION of Kirtley F. Mather as President Elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Council has performed a twofold service that is much to its credit. It has chosen a competent administrative leader, and it has properly rewarded a member who has not been excelled in contribution to the Association. For the past few years the major problems before the Association have been numerous and difficult. In this postwar epoch the Association has increased greatly in membership and it has passed through its centennial year into the important second century. In these years a steady hand and a cheerful spirit are Mather's contribution to the work and responsibilities of the Executive Committee. Throughout his term of service, which will now continue for three years more, he has been unquestionably and justifiably popular with the Executive Committee, the Council, and the membership of the Association.

Mather has had a wide and long experience in presiding over scientific societies and other organizations, and he brings to his new position also a personal fortitude that is needed in these days of nervousness about loyalty probes and the civil liberties of scientists. His record as chairman of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, as national president of the American Association of Scientific Workers, and even long ago in the defense of science at the Scopes anti-evolution trial in Tennessee, bespeaks his firm position as an outspoken advocate of American free citizenship. He has played a leading role in opposition to the recurrent proposals for "minority oppression" legislation in Massachusetts, and his skillful open debate with the Attorney General a year ago was a turning point in the fight for academic freedom in the Commonwealth.

In another aspect of the Association's work Mather is an excellent choice at this time. He seeks to maintain a spirit of integration and coordination among the naturally diverging specialized sciences. Our national scientific societies need leaders who may in the main be highly specialized in a narrow field, but who have wide sympathies over the whole modern picture. Primarily a geologist and geographer, Mather is also effectively concerned with all problems of natural resources, and with their relation to government and human welfare. His concern with natural philosophy (in the modern sense) and with religion, with educational experiments and progress, and with the art of taking special knowledge from the field of experts to the areas where adult nonscientific citizens operate, indicates the catholicity of his interests and activities. The titles of his recent books illustrate this wide and human perspective:

Adult Education: A Dynamic for Democracy (with Dorothy Hewitt)
Science in Search of God
A Source Book of Geology (with S. L. Mason)
Sons of the Earth
Enough and to Spare
Crusading for Life.

These are in addition, of course, to numerous technical papers that have in large part resulted from Mather's long association with the U. S. Geological Survey.

The new President Elect has throughout his life known many parts of America and many phases of American life. Born in Chicago and preliminarily educated at Denison and Chicago Universities, he has continued his education as teacher at the University of Arizona, Queens College (Ontario), Denison University, and Harvard University since 1924, and in numerous travels all over North America for the U. S. Geological Survey and with student groups. He has undertaken two extensive surveys in South America for a commercial company. In the past three years he has made trips through Europe that should be useful in working with international problems of the Association. Mather was the official representative of the American Association in 1947 at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Dundee, Scotland, and he has been both Secretary and Vice President of the AAAS Section on Geology and Geography.

His travels and his many acquaintances have naturally made Mather's public lectures outstanding, and have brought him into cooperative relations with many scientific, educational, and religious groups in America and abroad. In the summers of his early student years in the Midwest, before his geological travels began, Mather carried through the rather usual American program of experimenting with some of the tough realities. He has been office boy, factory worker, ticket seller, salesman. In later days he has worked hard at a different level. Some of these mature labors for the good of science and society should be men-

tioned. His "Scientist's Bookshelf" for the *American Scientist* is probably the best periodical review of scientific books that is now available. His unique course in general education in Harvard University, "The Impact of Science on Modern Life," is for more than geologists; it is, in fact, given in the Department of Social Sciences. His work, as chairman, for the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union has been mentioned. The "Mather Report" on the condition and problems of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has been made the basis of the new policies of that ancient society. As president of the Newton (Massachusetts) Community Forum, and as an organizer of the Boston Center of Adult Education, he has shown his responsiveness to problems of his community.

These are only a few of the scientific and social activities of the Association's new President Elect. We can summarize by saying that he is practical enough to be an authority on the national petroleum resources, and idealistic enough to dream about a planet peopled with decent and well-fed world citizens. Both the practical and the ideal will be useful in the new post to which he has been elevated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A Report of the New York Meeting, December 26–31, 1949

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The 116th Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science came to an end shortly after 6 p.m., Saturday, December 31, when the last paper of the final program—Section C, Chemistry, was read. The official opening was 2 p.m., Monday, December 26, with the first showing of scientific films in the Science Theatre, the completion of the preparation of the exhibits in the Annual Science Exposition, and the initial session of Section H, Anthropology. In between there were nearly 400 sessions, large and small, and the ebb and flow of all those who had traveled, many of them great distances, to establish contact with colleagues in all the principal fields of science. In one sense the Meeting has become history, but in another sense its stimulating effects will continue for many months. Both for those who attended and for those who did not come, it is appropriate to summarize this Annual Meeting of the AAAS for the year 1949.

Attendance. The 116th Meeting was by far the largest one in the Association's 101 years. According to reports from many sources, it was also one of the most successful. Despite its record-breaking size, it was one of the most convenient meetings, since the large majority of the sessions took place in five hotels and the Manhattan Center, all within a single block from Pennsylvania Station and two blocks from each other.

Mere size, however, is not the criterion of a successful scientific convention—though, naturally, one meets more fellow workers, old friends, and former teachers and students, especially in different fields, at a well-attended meeting. The adequacy of the physical arrangements, the caliber of the programs, the relative convenience of the session rooms of related societies, the arrangements for projection and other adjuncts, are all factors to be taken into account. In general, therefore, the Sixth New York Meeting ranks high.

A combination of factors was responsible for the decidedly exceptional attendance: 1) All but one of the Association's 17 sections and subsections had programs, all excellent and a number with multiple sessions. 2) Sixty-one organizations participated. These comprised affiliated and associated societies principally, but also some others that do not always meet with the AAAS. 3) There was no full-scale December Meeting in 1948, it having been replaced by the Centennial Meeting in Washington in September. 4) There had been a lapse of 21 years since the previous Meeting in New York. 5) The size of the metropolitan area and its scientific and student population contributed to the size of the Meeting. 6) There was also, perhaps, a feeling that the threat earlier in the year, of an incipient economic depression, was entirely dissipated. (Other conventions also found 1949 a big year). It is unlikely that Association meetings will reach this record-breaking size again in the immediate future.

Meeting Rooms and Projection. Including those on the campus of Columbia University, there were 398 sessions, business meetings, and meal functions scheduled at the 116th Meeting. In the five Penn Zone hotels—the Statler, the New Yorker, the McAlpin, the Martinique, and the Governor Clinton—42 public rooms, with capacity from 25 to 1,400, were used throughout the week, without charge either to the Association or the societies. To accommodate the American Sociological Society, which came in late, it was necessary to rent three meeting rooms for three days at the Manhattan Center; the Association was able to share this cost in view of the high percentage of registration by the sociologists. At Columbia University, 21 additional meeting rooms were used by the socie-