

## THE ART OF LISTENING

### WELCOME

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**T**HIS afternoon I am charged with two very pleasant tasks. The first is as provost of the host faculty to bid you welcome to our symposium and welcome you to Sheffield; and the second is to introduce you to our chairman of the day, Professor Stuart-Harris who is Sir George Franklin professor of medicine in the University of Sheffield, and perhaps best known for the vast amount of work which he has carried out in the field of 'virus disease', and influenza in particular. He is a member of the Virus Advisory Body of the World Health Organization, and his attainments in medicine have been recognized in this country by his appointment as a Croonian Lecturer of the Royal College of Physicians, and in the U.S.A. by his appointment as Visiting Professor to the Universities of Albany, New York and Vanderbilt, South Carolina. He is a true and real friend of this faculty, and the best general-practitioner orientated professor of medicine we have ever had. It is interesting to note that in recent years six of his registrars have entered general practice in Sheffield, a brain drain in the right direction.

### INTRODUCTION

**Professor C. H. Stuart-Harris**, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P. (*Sir George Franklin Professor of Medicine, University of Sheffield*)

**W**HEN my wife heard that I was to take the chair at a symposium on 'The Art of Listening' she said: 'That ought to be good for you, you never listen to anyone at

home.' So you see I really stand completely without qualification in regard to your subject and I am proposing to spend the afternoon, as you will be, in listening to this excellent panel of speakers. Lord Wilberforce who will be speaking first has had a very distinguished career; he is in fact an academic in the legal profession and his bench is a most unusual one. I gather that he is a judge in the House of Lords, and this is a sort of court of appeal over all courts of appeal. He was at Winchester and the New College, Oxford, and in 1932 became a Fellow and later treasurer of All Souls College. He has also had an interesting experience in international law and was senior U.K. representative on the Legal Committee of International Civil Aviation, after having served in the Control Commission following the last war. Lord Wilberforce was a member of the Medical Practices Committee of the Ministry of Health for ten years after the inception of the National Health Service. Amongst other things he has been interested in restrictive practices, which brings him very much up to the modern scene. We shall look forward very keenly to hearing what a judge has learnt about listening; he must in his time have listened to a great many people.

He will be followed by Mr Saunders, the principal probation officer for Sheffield, who has been in probation work for 20 years. Before coming to Sheffield he was at Brighton and Northampton, and he also had a link with the medical profession, having served on B.M.A. committees including those on venereal diseases and promiscuity.

He will be succeeded by Dr Tonge, consultant psychiatrist to the United Sheffield Hospitals and a member of the department of psychiatry, with Professor Stengel as the chief. After him comes our representative from the Church, the Rt Reverend E. R. Wickham, Bishop of Middleton. He was in Sheffield up to about six years ago, having been ordained originally in the diocese of Newcastle, and he took part in the very interesting work in Sheffield of the Sheffield Industrial Mission; here he was chaplain to the bishop for many years after the war. He is at the present time (in addition to his bishopric) vice-chairman of the Church Assembly Committee for Industry and chairman of the Department of Urban and Industrial Mission of the World Council of Churches.

Finally, we come to our other representative from the profession of medicine—Dr Lord, a family doctor from Alford in Lincolnshire and one of the people who suggested

the topic of 'the art of listening'. He has recently returned from a six months Nuffield fellowship in the United States and has therefore acquired a theme which is a very different one in terms of family practice from that in Britain. It will be interesting to know whether Americans listen any better than Britishers to what he has to say.

## LEGAL LISTENING

### **Lord Wilberforce** (*Lord of Appeal*)

I suppose that the choice of myself as the opener of this discussion has been made on old-fashioned county cricket rules. That is to say: start with the hardened professional to break the bowling, and then hope for some free-hitter later on to provide the entertainment. One can hear the selectors saying, 'Listening! well, why not get a judge, he is paid to listen and overpaid to listen five hours a day; he ought to know something about the job.' This assignment I accept, and I will give an account of the occupation though I shall try to explain that ultimately a judge is not paid to listen, but after listening, to do something else. With him, as with the medical or psychological analyst, this is a distinction of importance.

I could illustrate that perhaps by a little conversation I had with a friend the other day about someone who had just been promoted to the bench. I said how glad I was to hear of the appointment. My friend replied: 'It is indeed very timely, because he has just become more or less completely deaf, and is losing all his practice as a barrister.' Then I said, 'Well, isn't that a bit of a handicap to him on the bench,' to which he replied: 'Oh not at all, he sits in divorce where it is quite unnecessary to hear what is going on.'

But let me start seriously with the listening process, as lawyers experience it. Judicial listening is, of course, an extension of lawyers' listening; judges mostly have been lawyers for 20 years or more before they become judges. I am speaking for the moment of judges in this country; on the continent a judge is appointed at 30 years of age or under, being trained straight into the job, and this gives his listening a different character. To understand an English judge's listening process, it is necessary to look back over his career as a lawyer and as an advocate. It is elementary to this audience to say that listening, like other senses and especially like