

## ADDRESS OF PROFESSOR W. SCHERMERHORN\*

*President, International Society for Photogrammetry, presented to members  
of the American Society of Photogrammetry at the Cosmos Club,  
Washington, D. C., on October 30, 1947*

WHEN I came to the United States I had no intention of making a speech concerning aerial surveys. I am not in a very good position to make a speech for various reasons. The first and the most important one is that it has been five years since I left my real profession. From May 1942 until the end of 1943 I spent my time in a German hostage camp. From the moment of my liberation on Christmas 1943 I disappeared in the underground movement in Amsterdam, where I tried to do my best against our common German enemies in the resistance. It seems that this period changed my life in a very important way, because after the liberation I was assigned the task of being Prime Minister of my country. The elections in May 1946 made the Labor party second to the Roman Catholic party and for this reason I had to resign as Prime Minister and leave the post to one of my Roman Catholic friends. After this I spent a full year as President of the Commission General in the Netherlands East Indies trying to settle the disputes which arose between the Indonesians and the Netherlands after the capitulation of Japan. I suppose that all of you will understand that these situations left me no time at all to think about photogrammetry. The time spent in the resistance accounts perhaps for my forgetting everything from the earlier period of my life, thinking on the one hand about the Germans on our heels and on the other hand about the future of our country; making plans for a better world than was in existence before the war. Now I am back in another position as Member of Parliament on the one hand and as one of the leading men in the organization of the Aerial Survey Branch of the Netherlands, trying to rebuild in this organization what has been destroyed by the Germans and could not be properly resumed immediately after the war for various reasons.

Besides all this I am still President of the International Society for Photogrammetry but, after the short story I told you, you will understand why, in the years behind me, I did not think very much about this job. During a war it seems there is no possibility for any international organization whatsoever and immediately after the war I had other troubles. Even during these last two years the thoughts of many people were not primarily directed towards international organization. Everyone has to rebuild things which are lost during the war and one's primary interest goes towards one's own country. Even in the case of the United States it seems that there is no other possibility. You with your enormous task in each branch of economic and social life are in the first place responsible for the reconversion from war to peacetime services. It seems that international organization is useful only insofar as it renders services to oneself. This is characteristic of the whole field of international organization in the postwar world, and I believe that an international society for photogrammetry will not prove to be an exception.

I suppose it will be necessary to recognize this fact before resuming the activities of the International Society for Photogrammetry. Only by taking this into account is there a chance for close cooperation between the various national

\* Editor's Note: Professor Schemerhorn's address dealt with many interesting facets of the political and economical situation in Western Europe but due to space limitations only the parts dealing with the International Society and an international review are presented here.

societies in such a way that the interests of other countries are served as well as possible.

Accepting this point of view, I want to say a few words about the International Society for Photogrammetry. As you know, before the war the activity of the International Society was visible in two different ways. The first having been the International Congresses for Photogrammetry, the last of which was in 1938 in Rome. The records of this Congress have been published in "Internationales Archiv für Photogrammetrie." It is a series of important publications started by Austrian scientists in the early days of the development of photogrammetry, showing the development and the history of photogrammetry from the early beginning until 1938.

The second branch of activity started after the Congress in Rome with the publication of an international review named *Photogrammetria*, under the leadership of an international committee of editors, of which I had the honor to be President. The purpose of this review was to bring to the attention of various scientists and professionals, leading articles important to every country. In many cases we received original articles; in some cases we printed translations of articles which had been published in national reviews like PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING and in other cases we published a description of the article accompanied by a critique.

This review *Photogrammetria* was published by a German firm, Wichmann, in Berlin. Translation is one of the most important problems faced by an international review because many of the more important articles were published in two or three languages, and in nearly all cases with at least one or two short excerpts in other languages. The languages in use were English, French, German, Spanish and Italian.

The Board of the International Society for Photogrammetry nowadays faces the problem of the revival of this Society. The easiest problem can be seen in the International Congress. From the first until the tenth of September, 1948, the first International Congress after the Second World War will be held at the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands. Delft is near the Hague, as some of you know, and we hope to be able to receive our guests as well as possible in accordance, however, with the material situation of western Europe.

The activity of this Congress will be the same as that of the Rome conference. We hope to organize an exhibition using some of the buildings of our university which are, in the first half of September, available, because it is the end of the summer vacation. I suppose that it will be of the greatest importance that the United States technicians and scientists, who carried on such a successful program during the war, present their results in an adequate manner to other people. I know that you have many visitors from abroad. By bringing everything you have together in one exhibition you will give to many who have no opportunity to come to the United States an impression of the technical development, which is in accordance with the political situation of the United States in the postwar world.

We hope to organize the discussions so that you will be able to have copies of the reports in advance, but I cannot promise this because we as Congress leaders are depending on the various reports of the secretaries of the six Congress committees and these poor people depend on the various national societies. The experience until now has been that all reports are submitted much too late and if this happens we will again be forced to listen to many long speeches instead of using our time for more important discussions. Especially since the United States will have such an important position and can bring us a great deal of new

experience in nearly every branch of our science, the discussion about this will be the most important in the Congress. If during the Congress, everybody has to study all the new methods and instruments developed after 1938 too much time will be consumed and the discussions cannot be very fruitful. For this reason the Board of the International Society will stress again and again the necessity of sending the reports as quickly as possible. The most practical method would be to have printed before the Congress, a volume of the International Archives containing all these reports, but I am afraid that we are not in a position to attain this goal.

Concerning the question of the International Review, I should like to make a few remarks without making any definite proposal. The only thing I can do is to suggest a number of alternatives, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each of these, hoping that in the time between now and the Congress you will think them over and a decision can be made at the Congress in accordance with the opinions of the various national societies.

The first solution is the revival of the review *Photogrammetria*, organized as before. As far as I can see, it is not possible to use the firm of Wichmann. I received letters from this German firm some time ago which I have not answered because of my feeling toward these people in general.

This is the first time since the war that I have had the opportunity to speak to colleagues in photogrammetry and pay tribute to the late Von Gruber, not for his knowledge of photogrammetry, but for his courage. Perhaps few of you know that he had the courage to refuse, even before the war, the position of Director of the Prussian Geodetic Institute, in the chair of famous German scientists such as Helmert, because he did not want to accept any public position in Germany as long as the anti-Jewish review *Der Stürmer* was allowed to be published in Germany. That he was imprisoned long before the war after one of the famous "free" elections of Hitler, some of you may know.

It may be necessary to have *Photogrammetria* published in another country—perhaps in a country where a national review for photogrammetry cannot exist, even though there is great interest in photogrammetric publications. In a situation such as this the international review would have a certain number of national subscribers which, although insufficient for a national review, would make an important contribution to the economic existence of an international review. We should try to find a country where the expenses of printing are low. Another aspect is that it should also be the country of the chief editor or of the few men who are responsible for compiling this review. It would not be practical to have the main editors in the United States and to have the review published in Italy or in another European country.

The last aspect I want to mention is the possibility of getting translations in an easy manner. Our experience with *Photogrammetria* shows that many times it is more difficult to obtain good translations than to get the articles, and the assistance which the Zeiss firm gave to *Photogrammetria* before the war was very useful.

A second alternative is to use one of the more important existing national reviews as an international review. Without any doubt PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING is now more important than any other publication in this field. It is so good, that I can easily imagine some of you don't feel the need for an international review. Reading PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING may give you the impression that you are getting everything that is important. Naturally you will realize that there are other articles, published in foreign languages which would also prove valuable to Americans and other English reading people. A solution

would be to translate such articles into English and publish them in PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING. Take for instance, an article in the *Swiss Survey Review* of September, 1947 about "Theory and Practice of the Relative Orientation of Vertical Pictures" written by Dr. Brandenberger. In my opinion this article is worthwhile to be studied by everybody who is interested in the theory and practice of stereoscopic plotting machines such as the Wild A-5 or the stereoplanigraph. This article is published in the German language and it is a pity that it has not been immediately published in an international review in different languages.

This solution of translating such articles into English might be sufficient for Great Britain and the United States, but the Spanish- and French-speaking world had, so far as I know, no national review which can be compared with PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING in which such an article could be translated in the same way. For this reason, I believe there would be certain advantages in having an international review.

At present PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING is published quarterly. One possibility perhaps is to have three issues yearly of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING as an American publication and three other issues as an international review. Some of the articles now published in the existing American review could be published in the international review. I do not know whether or not this is a solution. I suppose that it will be necessary to make an estimate of the cost of each of the various methods of publication. To have the publication in the United States would create, for many countries, the difficulty of the dollar exchange, which is already troublesome to us in getting PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING. Perhaps this will be so important a factor that the first alternative I mentioned will be preferred.

I still hope that all these discussions before the Congress will result in the revival of *Photogrammetria* in one way or the other. My experience with *Photogrammetria* is that we get more important articles out of the various scientific and professional circles than could be obtained without such a review. A second advantage is that the whole position of our science and technique is improved by having both international and national organizations and publications. There is not the same need for propaganda in aerial survey as before the war. In the period between the two world wars it was possible for conservative government officials to put aside all kinds of reports and proposals without taking action on them. Now many things are published and there are even articles in the popular reviews. This fact makes the same behavior of government officials less easy. Such activities as an international congress, an international review, your big annual national meetings and your own review are of the greatest importance as propaganda for the application of aerial surveys.

After what I have seen here in only a few days I could understand your reply that you don't need propaganda any longer, since the war and the enormous need of maps during the war, and the results you got during that time furnished better propaganda than anything else. But don't forget that the position of the United States is exceptional and, notwithstanding the big impression that all I have seen here has made on me, I hope that you agree with me that there also exists in other countries the hope and the feeling that they may contribute to the development of aerial surveys with the small means available to them. They still may have some hope to succeed because there is one important item in this job which is shared by all of us, in both small and large countries—this is human brains and the will to create something in the field of our activity wherever we are living or working.