

Ladies, Gentlemen, Members of the International Council, Members of the United Kingdom and Scottish Committees, Apprentices:

First of all I should like to say how sorry I am not to be here with you at this friendly gathering this evening. Unfortunately I had urgent business in Spain. I do, however, hope to be back with you all again in Glasgow on the 28th.

Although my absence prevents me from speaking to you personally, I do wish to leave you a message expressing my pleasure at this opportunity you have all been given to meet here tonight - one of the many occasions on which we are constantly being honoured.

Speaking to our apprentices who have already completed their task, I should like to say that you have worked intelligently, armed with skill and knowledge of your various trades. We have all been able to appreciate your technical skill and hard work, but there is something more important than this - the fact that you have lived and competed together, sportingly, without a single bad gesture. You have thus given a magnificent example of responsibility and the way in which you, the youth of today, can reconcile our old spiritual values, which must be preserved, with the technical needs of our age. And all this you have done without losing for one moment your natural "joie de vivre".

You have proved that you are solid, responsible human beings and this to me is very important since it shows that all countries are tackling the problem of vocational training in a spirit of harmony, both as regards technical competence and spiritual values, thus transforming the old conception of work as a market commodity into that of a way of life which is transforming the whole life of our society, something which provides the personal satisfaction of having a job well done and of making a contribution to the life of the community as a whole.

I can well understand how anxious you all are about the results of the Competition. But your's has already been a joint triumph of which you can legitimately be proud, and all of us whose pleasure and honour it has been to organize this XIVth International Competition offer our hearty congratulations. You may be sure that even now, while I am in Spain, my heart and thoughts are with you.

On behalf of the Organizing Council, I should like to thank you all and pray that God will continue to help us in our efforts, for the good of mankind in all our countries and the whole world - and especially the United Kingdom and Scotland.

Eugenio Lopez.