

## HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT 1978/1979

The year 1978/79 has been a particularly busy one and a period of growing importance and interest of the Association's affairs on a national as well as an international basis. As the United Kingdom Chapter of A.I.D.A., (the International Association of Insurance Law), B.I.L.A. has participated in the 5th World Congress in Madrid in October, 1978 and has held a Colloquium in London in July, 1979 with representatives from some 13 Countries on topics of practical and technical importance. During the period your Committee, with the assistance of specialist working parties, has considered legal developments on a wide range of subjects similar to those mentioned in my report last year and has kept a harmonious relationship with other interested bodies including the B.I.A., B.I.B.S., A.I.R.M.I.C. and the Department of Trade. We have welcomed into Membership the newly Chartered Institute of Arbitrators whose Director and Secretary, Mr. B.W. Vigrass, attended our London Colloquium.

Several innovations have taken place which have proved very successful and the Committee's efforts to improve attendance at meetings by holding some of them at lunchtime in the City of London, have proved worthwhile. Apart from the advantage to speakers and members alike of the change of venue attendances have improved and a special word of thanks is due to the Institute of London Underwriters for the use of their premises at 40 Lime Street. Our programme for 1979/80 has been settled and is going to print for issue with the next Bulletin and in time for the first meeting on 2nd November.

In addition to our Annual Luncheon held in June we had our first meeting to be known in future as "the President's Luncheon" to take place on the third Wednesday in November. The Guest Speaker this year was Mr. Bob Sloan, Executive Director of the Commercial Union and President of the Chartered Insurance Institute, who expressed the need for wider publicity of the activities of our Association and to stimulate deeper interest in our work.

It was my pleasure to attend as a guest the Annual Dinner of A.I.R.M.I.C. last November. There is a considerable overlap of interest between our two bodies and I came away with their good wishes to our membership. It was timely for Sir John Methven, Director of the C.B.I., on behalf of the guests to voice some apprehensions about developments in connection with Products Liabilities - a subject with which we have been concerned in a number of ways since I became Hon. Sec.; there is still a lot to be done in this and other areas of law reform and a new Sub-Committee is being formed under the Chairmanship of Professor Hugh Cockerell to deal with these developments for it has proved exceedingly difficult during the past year for a single Committee and Secretariat to manage the increasing volume of work; specialist volunteers to help in this work would be most welcome.

The privilege of presenting the Annual Report on the affairs of the Association gives me the pleasure of saying how fortunate we have been in being supported in our work during the past two years by our retiring President, Owen M.W. Swingland, Esq., Q.C., who has so frequently and readily given us his most valuable aid and advice. Together with our retiring Chairman, John Butler, the Committee have been steered through a period of time, opportunity and experience which I shall remember as a most rewarding personal involvement. To them, Sir John Donaldson our President-elect, my fellow officers and Committee I am indebted for their help and friendship.

It is with much regret that I am unable to offer myself for re-election. It is necessary for me to reduce my commitments at a time when B.I.L.A. needs are seen to be growing and its membership increasing; I wish my successor, Tony Kay, whose appointment I most heartily recommend, the reward of pleasure and companionship as I have known it through the many activities involved.

I would particularly wish to thank our two Vice Presidents, Hugh Cockerell and Gordon Shaw and my predecessor in office, Pat Saxton for their support and guidance at difficult times and, by no means least, my assistants in handling the day-to-day work (which is not inconsiderable), Mrs. Watson and Miss Murphy.

You will see that on the basis of our Hon. Treasurer's Report and recommendations no increase is proposed in subscriptions for the time being.

My future commitments to the Association depend on my election to the Committee but as I have received formal notice of my nomination I shall be pleased to continue some involvement in the work in addition to the pleasurable social engagements through which so much of our work is done. I hope that all members will continue their support of our activities and increase their own commitment by introducing colleagues and friends in the run-up to the next World Congress in London in 1982 which now has the support necessary to ensure its success.

R.A. SIMS

SEPTEMBER 1979