
Introductory Remarks at the Afternoon Session, 24 February 1977

Lord Todd

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BY LORD TODD, P.R.S.

In taking the Chair at this session of the discussion, I have to do two things in addition to thanking the organizers for inviting me to do so. The first is to apologize for the fact that a variety of other duties in the Society has prevented me from doing more than looking in on some of the papers.

The second is to attempt some kind of defence for being here at all. Actually, when Dr Kelly asked me to take part, it was with some regret that I realized I was unlikely to spend a sufficient amount of time in the meetings really to be a participant. This is because I actually have some remote and rather amateurish interest in some of the things you are discussing.

I am, of course, a chemist, but my subsidiary subjects both in this country and in Germany were geology, mineralogy and metallurgy. Later, I was for a year acting Head of the Metallurgy Department at Cambridge although I doubt whether I made any notable impact on that science during this period. So my first close contact with the parent disciplines of most of you here was between thirty-five and forty years ago. And during the long period since then, I have been aware of some gradual but interesting changes. First metallurgy began to be infiltrated by the expression 'solid state' and then gradually to be almost replaced by the designation 'materials science'. Simultaneously, geology became less descriptive and more physical with the rise of geophysics and the increasing number of its adherents.

Now it has seemed, even to me, that in phenomena like creep, plastic deformation and fatigue the geologist and the metallurgist or materials scientist were dealing with the same problems even if the scenario was different. For this reason I think the present discussion meeting at which both groups can get together is an excellent idea, and I congratulate the organizers who have brought it about and am very pleased that it should be held under the aegis of The Royal Society – a body which throughout its long history has striven to promote 'natural knowledge' without regard to artificial disciplinary barriers.