

Dear Members,

At the outset I would like to apologise on behalf of the Council on the delay in convening the AGM. This was mainly due to delay in completing the auditing of accounts (30th January 2001) due to late receipt of audited accounts from some branches. We are planning steps to ensure that future AGMs are held well within the stipulated time with the help of all branches.

The Annual Report has already been circulated and presume it to have been read by all of you. I would like to briefly highlight the salient features.

Excess of Income over expenditure during the year was about 14.63 lakhs compared to Rs. 12.19 lakhs during previous year. Major source of income was membership subscription of about Rs. 8.27 lakhs which was incidentally almost same as last year. Net income for seminars & courses conducted by branches was about Rs. 7.79 lakhs.



Subscription arrears of dormant members is increasing. Efforts to reach such members directly and through branches have not resulted in much success. G. P. Committee has recommended deletion of such members whose subscription is pending since 1996. Total membership as on 31.3.2000 is 4029, an increase of 245 members during the year.

Financial support by way of advertisement to IWJ has decreased. We need to enhance it to make IWJ self sustaining.

During the year, computerisation of the data pertaining to member details and E-mail communication was initiated. Office aids and equipment in the HQ need to be further upgraded to provide better and quick service to members and various committees.

Before we take up the regular agenda items I would like to share some of my perceptions with you:

As President of IIW, I feel, we must now look ahead and draw an action plan which IIW should adopt to enhance its effectiveness and contribute substantially to the growth of welding technology in the country.

As you are already aware, we organized an International Welding Conference IWC-2001 last month in Delhi. Despite the recessionary phase which the industry is passing through and the seismic calamity which struck the western part, we had a good level of participation and presentation of papers – 85 total (including 37 on research, 15 on fabrication, 19 on trends in welding, 4 each on Reclamation & Repair, HRD and Safety etc.). Positive feature was participation of welding societies from Russia, Singapore, Hungary, Australia and the International Institute of Welding.

The economic survey published last week have brought out the decline in industrial growth from 6.4% 1999 to 5.7% in 2000 during the period April to December. The steel sector with which welding industry is closely linked experienced a decline from 15% to 12.8%. Overall infrastructure sector saw a dip from 9.1% to 7.7%. Industry is taking all steps to curtail expenditure to maintain their bottom line. Under these circumstances seminars and conferences are bound to be thinly participated. Therefore, in my opinion, we must curtail this activity during 2001 and instead concentrate on Training, Education, Qualification and Certification. You are all aware IIW conducted examination for AMIIW has been recognised by AICTE as equivalent to degree in engineering. We must take this opportunity to upgrade the examination system and help the prospective candidates in preparing for it through a well structured training programme to be conducted with the help of IIW branches. Besides giving an opportunity to the branches to earn revenue, it will also enhance their activities and utility for IIW members. Education Committee is already working on this.

Another issue which needs to be focused with more vigour and purposefulness is international co-operation. As the world boundaries shrink, such co-operation becomes inevitable. We had a good interaction with the visiting

overseas societies and very useful presentation by Prof. Ian Handerson of WTIA in the Education Committee. We can develop our training programmes, specially the distant learning programme, with their help to make our system world class. With spurt in activity in the construction, gas, pipelines, refineries and off-shore platforms in the Gulf and ASEAN region, training of manpower in such areas, with help of these societies perhaps, can give our manpower more employment opportunities. The Asean Welding Federation (AWF) has offered membership to IIW also. We can benefit through our association with them.

For these two issues we could even seek financial help from the HRD Ministry.

The third issue we should concentrate on is "Focussed R&D". We have as IIW members, very knowledgeable and experienced persons from industry, educational institutions and research centres. I feel that IIW should pool the expertise towards focussed macro level projects which will help the industry. These could include introduction of new processes, mechanisation of fabrication and welding; health and safety and energy efficiency. We could enlist financial support of government agencies specially DST. As a matter of fact we must consider patronisation of IIW by some government agencies by perhaps making a Secretary level person as Patron. This will help IIW to grow faster and get wider recognition and acceptance.

Technology, world over is changing very fast. In electronics & IT today's technology is obsolete tomorrow. Welding has become high tech. Electronic controls and digital technology have been introduced. Lasers and Electron Beam Welding, Vacuum and low pressure plasma coating etc. are widely being used. IIW needs to keep a watch on global developments and keep its members updated. Excellent efforts are being done by the editorial board of IWJ towards this. I feel we need to communicate with members more frequently and more broadly. I would suggest starting of a "Tech-Scan" bulletin to be prepared, may be initially as a part of IWJ, and later perhaps with a monthly frequency, to highlight developments in the fabrication and welding field.

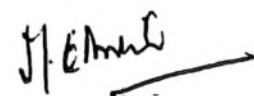
Finally, strength of a society or institution is its members. We need to take concerted and continuous efforts not only to retain the present level of membership but also enhance it to touch a figure of 5000 by the end of this year. More important will be to draw big industrial houses also as ICMs. We must convince industry to play proactive role. Many societies world over are actively supported - financially also - by industry. One way to infuse interest in them will be to conduct training courses for welders and supervisors in their plants which will not only help in popularizing welding education but also help IIW gain a wider acceptance and credibility in the industry.

We also need to galvanise some of the branches and help them conduct their functions more efficiently towards achieving this in their respective regions. We have already introduced e-mail in communication from IIW headquarters. Communication - to and fro - to branches should also be using e-mail. IIW has a web site giving full information about it. We should also have information sharing - on reciprocal basis - with other overseas societies also.

If this august body approves these suggestions, we can draw an action plan for the year 2001 and quickly initiate action to achieve these objectives. If we do so, we would attain the status of a real professional body of repute in the service of the nation.

Involvement and contribution from everyone of you, however small, will make a big impact on achieving these goals. I know we all cherish to be associated with IIW which is so close to our hearts. Let us resolve to build up IIW to new heights even if we have to sacrifice our own ego.

Thank you,



M. K. MITTAL
President, IIW