

London 1947: A Caricature

by Brigitte Van Tiggelen, Danielle Fauque and Fabienne Meyers

The caricature published in *Chemistry and Industry*, 2 August 1947, is Fred May's impressions of the luncheon offered to the XIth International Congress of Pure and Applied Chemistry at the May Fair Hotel, London, 18 July 1947 by the Society of Chemical Industry to distinguished chemists on the occasion of its centennial [1]. Fred May (1891-1976) was a caricaturist and painter, who sent his first cartoons from the front in 1917. May insists on the strenuous time the toastmaster had during the dinner that welcomed many prominent British and international figures in the chemical sciences and industry. Dr Leslie H. Lampitt, president of the SCI, chairman of the Congress and treasurer of IUPAC (1947-1957) "expressed that welcome in a very homely way" [1]. William Hulme Lever, 2nd Viscount Leverhulme (1888-1949), cofounder of Unilever, a past president of the SCI, acted as president of the Congress [2].

In 1947, the IUPAC was in the midst of a recovery, in the aftermath of World War II that interrupted chemical cooperation. IUPAC President, Colonel Marston-Taylor Bogert (USA, 1938-1947—the President who stood in office for the longest period of time) had written to all nations members in January 1940: "... *The Union, as its name signifies, is an organization of scientists banded together for the good, not of any one country, but of all. Its aims are the welfare and happiness of all mankind, through the advancement of civilization by the triumphs of chemistry...*" [3]. As the war became global, Bogert's hope were reduced to naught. Nevertheless, thanks to his determination and the resilience of many chemists, this was not the end of the Union and in Spring 1945 there was enough will to revive the Union and rebuild the Bureau and organize a "*Reprise de contact*" meeting in London in 1946 [4]. And so it went, the XIth International Congress of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the 14th *Conférence Internationale de Chimie* (equivalent of today's General Assembly) were to be held simultaneously in London, in July 1947 [5].

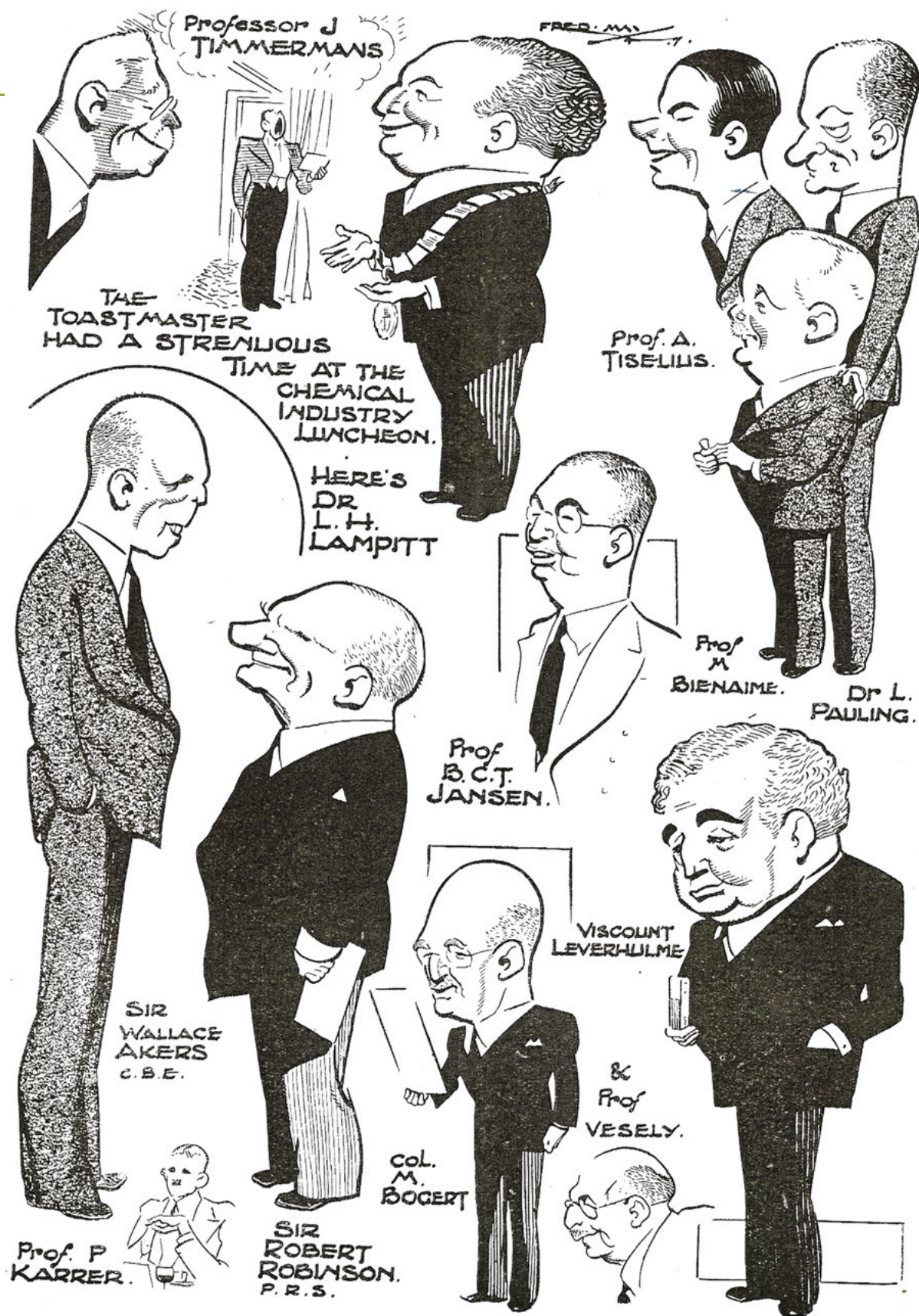
Besides Bogert, the cartoon shows Sir Robert Robinson (UK), president of the Royal Society, and IUPAC Vice President 1938-1947, who would continue as Bureau Member from 1947-1951. Robinson was already a scientist of high repute, and was awarded Nobel Prize in Chemistry later that same year, in 1947. Others acquired executive positions during that meeting in London,

including Arne Tiselius (Sweden), who became IUPAC Vice President from 1947-1951 and would continue as President from 1951-1955; and he too would be awarded a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1948. Paul Karrer (Switzerland), winner of a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1937, was invited to deliver a lecture during the congress, and became Vice-President for the period 1947-1955.

Also depicted in the cartoon is Linus Pauling (USA, Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1954 and Peace in 1962) who presided over section II of the Congress on 17 July and delivered a lecture titled "Molecular Structure and Biological Specificity" [6]. Both Karrer and Pauling were conferred *honoris causa* degrees by the University of London along with Johannes Nicolaus Brønsted (1879-1947—he died in December that same year) and Cyril Norman Hinshelwood (1897-1967), who are not pictured in this cartoon. The presence of Sir Wallace Akers (1888-1954) is related to his service during wartime and his career in Imperial Chemical Industries. The French Robert Bienaimé (1876-1960) was at that time president of the *Société de Chimie Industrielle*, sister society of the *Society of Chemical Industry*. Lesser known figures but nevertheless renowned chemists and highly productive IUPAC members also present in the cartoon are the Belgian Jean Timmermans (1882-1971), director of the *Bureau international des Etalons physico-chimiques*; the Dutch Barend Jansen (1884-1962), specialist of nutrition who together with his colleague Willem F. Donath (1889-1957) was the first to isolate a vitamin in pure (crystalline) form (the anti-beriberi vitamin which they named thiamine)); and the Czechoslovakian Vítězslav Veselý (1877-1964), an organic chemist member of the Commission on oils, fats and derivatives that became an IUPAC commission in 1938 (Veselý was chair in 1937-1938, and the main promotor of this affiliation). 🏆

References

1. *Chemistry & Industry*, August 2, 1947, pp. 473-474
2. See William H. Leverhulme, XIth International Congress of Pure and Applied Chemistry. A message. *Chemistry & Industry*, July 12, 1947, p. 395.
3. Roger Fennell, *History of IUPAC 1919-1987*, Blackwell, 1994, p. 74.
4. For more details, see "Rebuilding IUPAC after WWII," infra p. 22
5. The full program of these jam-packed days is to be found in *Chemistry & Industry*, July 12, 1947, p. 401-403.
6. Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries. <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/coll/pauling/blood/notes/1947a.3.html>



The cartoon was published by the journal of the Society of Chemical Industry, *Chemistry and Industry*, August 2, 1947, p. 473 [ref. 1]. It is also available online as part of "It's in the Blood! A documentary History of Linus Pauling", from the Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries, <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/coll/pauling/blood/pictures/1947i.11.html>