

**FB's message to members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
(RICS) on his appointment in 1965**

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**A Message from the New Secretary**

My first thought on taking up office as Secretary is to establish contact with each individual member of the Institution whose servant I have become. A message in the journal is the simplest way to do this immediately, but it will be my aim to create as soon as possible more personal relationships wherever practicable. Already the personal contacts have been numerous, and I am exceedingly grateful to the many members who have fortified me in these early days with their expressions of confidence and goodwill. I shall strive to bear always in mind that in the last resort my duty is to the individuals who make up the membership of this great Institution.

My appointment, as you will know, marks a break with recent practice, since my background is in the field of government and parliamentary activity as seen from the viewpoint of the Civil Service. In dealing with an important aspect of the Institution's functions, namely that of bringing to bear on the development of government policy and legislation the expertise possessed by the profession of the land, I have no doubt this experience will be of help. The status which accrues to the profession from public awareness that the Institution is playing an important role in these matters of national policy attaches I am sure to every person entitled to describe himself as a chartered surveyor. For this reason, and because it must be the constant aim of any professional body to serve the public, I am anxious to do everything possible to improve the facilities for drawing on the expert knowledge of members wherever this is needed. I hope that all members who feel that they have something to contribute, whether they be in private practice or engaged in the public service, or indeed enjoying a well-earned retirement, will not hesitate to bring their views forward.

In this regard it is encouraging to hear of the work being done by the Junior Organisation in producing their 'Blueprint for the Seventies'. I was pleased to learn of the existence of this organisation, which is not, so far as I am aware, a common feature of professional bodies. I understand it is sometimes described as a 'ginger group' and no doubt the Secretary will come in for his share of gingering up, which is no bad thing! A profession which lacks its quota of vigorous younger members is in a parlous state and it is excellent that the Junior Organisation flourishes so strongly. For the same reason I was glad to hear that the number of applications for the forthcoming examinations of the Institution is running at a record level of over 9,000, though I appreciate that not all the applicants will be facing the examiners for the first time. No doubt we may expect further increases in future-aided by the proposed simplification of the rules of examination and training.

The great development of the profession, which is of course linked to the tide of prosperity which - occasional checks apart - has been in steady flow since the early 1950s, must inevitably be reflected in the activities of the Institution. If it is to play its full part in promoting improved productivity and the modernisation of professional techniques, the Institution must be prepared to expand and develop the services it provides. I shall always be alert to possibilities of improving those services, and I look forward to receiving suggestions from members whenever they feel moved to make them.

Improved services will usually involve increased burdens on the staff of the Institution and may necessitate additions to the staff from time to time. Except where increased costs are met by special charges, as in the case of the Building Cost Information Service and the recently established Technical Information Service, they must be met out of the general income of the Institution which, in any case, has to be stretched a little further each year in order to meet the rise in the cost of living. This steady rise, which despite the efforts of successive Governments shows no sign of coming to an end, places heavy burdens on those responsible for administering an organisation dependent upon members' subscriptions. It is to the credit of those bearing this responsibility in recent years that the increase in subscriptions at the beginning of 1959, which was calculated on a five-year basis, has helped to produce a surplus in each of those five years: Nevertheless, the time must inevitably come when the level of subscriptions, and perhaps their incidence, will need to be re-examined; and this will unfortunately be hastened by the big rise in prices during recent months. Another factor is the necessity to provide for the building of new headquarters for the Institution. Whether or not the recommendations of the Martin Report involving the moving of the Institution from its present site are acted on by the Government, it is plain that a new building will be required in the not too distant future.

I was somewhat dismayed when it was brought home to me just how many different national bodies there are which concern themselves with the profession of the land. This proliferation, for which there are no doubt good reasons, must have a weakening effect and I am glad to know that methods of securing increased co-operation within the profession are the constant concern of the Council of the Institution and of the kindred societies. Here, as elsewhere, the Institution must take the lead and its influence will ultimately depend very largely on how far each individual member is willing to exert himself to further its aims. I was interested to notice in this connection that every member promises on election to promote the objects of the Institution as far as is within his power and to attend its meetings as often as he conveniently can.

The wide range of professional activities embraced by the

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Institution is something I find particularly fascinating. It can only be a source of strength. I look forward to learning as time goes on a little about each of these disciplines, though naturally I do not aspire to become expert in any of them. I hope that members will bear in mind that I shall always be interested in the way they go about their professional work and, while bearing with my ignorance, will not be reluctant to enlighten it.

And so I enter upon what I hope will be many years of faithful service. I am supported by a loyal and efficient staff and by an abundance of friendliness and good feeling. I shall need your forbearance and understanding while I learn the ropes, and in return I pledge my wholehearted effort in a task I am proud to have had placed upon me.

*F. A. R. Bennion.*

The Chartered Surveyor (Journal of The Royal Institution Of Chartered Surveyors)

Vol. 98 No. 4, October 1965.