

The Chairman's Annual Report for the Year 1972-1973

At the close of the present session the Society enters on the twentieth year of its activity. The record of the Society's achievements over those years will form the subject of a future report, but one may express a sense of gratification to note that an organisation having such a very specialised appeal, should have successfully maintained and developed its activities for this length of time.

The membership of the Society has remained static at 35, but the Council and no doubt members also would be pleased to see numbers increase further as more people become aware of and interested in the Byelorussian heritage. We regret that Lady Dufferin has not felt able to continue as an active member of the Council by reason of her many other commitments, but we are happy to welcome her as one of our Vice-Presidents; we naturally wish to record our appreciation for the sustained interest she has always shown in the Society's work.

The Society's financial position is once again satisfactory. As at 4 February 1973 income stood at £1,371 and expenditure at £1,367 leaving a net surplus of £4. The expenditure incurred by rising printing costs has increased by comparison with the previous year, but this was more than offset by an increase in income from the sales of the Journal of Byelorussian Studies, and from a most generous grant received from the Byelorussian Charitable Trust. The Society wishes to record its sincere appreciation and thanks to the Trust for its continuing support.

During the current session the last number of Volume II (No. 4) of the Journal was published, and to mark the occasion the Chairman and Council of the Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain kindly gave a reception at St. Cyrils House, North Finchley on 3 March at which numerous members and friends of the Society were present. In a short speech on behalf of the Association, Mr. Michaluk expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Society and the Editorial Board over the past eight years.

The Society also organised the customary annual lecture course on Byelorussian history and culture at the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Seventh in the present series. Six lectures were read by a number of invited lecturers in the Antiquaries Lecture Hall. On 28 November the Hon. Secretary addressed the Society on 'Traditional dietetics and culinary usages in rural Byelorussia'. The Revd. Alexander Nadson lectured on 'Byelorussian Primers of the 16th and early 17th centuries' on 8 December 1972. 'Germanisms in some Byelorussian legal documents of the 16th and 17th centuries' was the subject of a paper read on 27 January 1973 by Fr. Robert Patry-

Tamušanski. Mr. James Dingley entertained members and visitors with a description of the 'Coinage and Mints of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania' on 27 March, and Dr Arnold McMillin gave a talk on 1 May on 'Aspects of Byelorussian verse and versification'. Finally Mr Bohdan Struminski of Warsaw addressed members on 'Byelorussian and Ukrainian linguistic relations' on 5 June. The lectures were attended by an audience which varied between 36 and 13, the latter low figure being explained by the effects of a Transport strike.

The Council met on 5 April 1973 to deal with the ordinary business and activities of the Society. A further meeting arranged for 19 June had to be adjourned until after the General Meeting.

A number of letters were addressed on behalf of the Society to the Press on a number of reports concerning Byelorussian affairs, and in particular the 'Byelorussian Heritage' exhibition at the Hendon Museum, which duly appeared in print. Approaches have also been made to a number of Members of Parliament with a view to organising a group interested in promoting Byelorussian cultural relations and affairs.

Finally the Society has agreed to distribute and sponsor Dr McMillin's Doctoral thesis on Byelorussian lexicology in the 19th century: the work will be published under the joint auspices of the School of Slavonic Studies of the University of London and the Anglo-Byelorussian Society.

With a growing number of contributors from all parts of the world to its Journal, the Society may rightly be satisfied with its activities over the past year.

5 July 1973

AUBERON HERBERT
Chairman