

We feel to-day deeply honoured by the visit of Mr. Choom Bum Lee Rector of the University of Korea. He bears the representation of an extremely dynamic and highly progressive system of higher education, with which we sincerely hope to strengthen our bonds in the future, acting toward the mutual understanding of the people of Korea and Chile, and toward a fruitful international cooperation.

It is indeed fortunate for us that an agreement for academic cooperation has been reached between our two institutions, and that we have thus access at a framework wherein to shape our future interchanges.

The presence of Korea in these parts of the world has dramatically changed in a few years. The availability of industrial products of high sophistication, of korean origin, together with a steady afflux of korean citizens, who bring their hard-working and dedicated cooperation to different branches of trade, are sure signs of a coming increase and diversification of our mutual relations.

It is of course well known that the economic development of the Republic of Korea has been spectacular. After the devastation of the korean war, a country was left with a per capita income of about 80 dollars, which was increased to almost two thousand dollars in a little over twenty years, with an almost incredible expanse of more than five hundred times in the value of the exports. These figures set an impressive example for the rest of the world, as they illustrate what intelligent planning, good conduction and hard work can achieve for the well-being of a people.

It is of course of great interest to us, that so large a part of korean economic effort should rest on international trade. It is obvious that the share of latin-american countries in this total volume of trade is comparatively small, and that it should offer a considerable field for increasing. This is especially stimulating to us, from the moment that in this country we too have come to recognize that international trade is a pillar of national well-being.

World trade is tightly linked to improvements in scientific and technological research and development. In few years the national investment in research and development in Korea approximately trebled, setting in this way an additional example of the way we should follow, especially since our own national efforts, even though oriented in the same direction, have been considerably feeblor.

The presence of korean citizens and of korean products in our midst, the study of the korean case history of successful overcoming of huge obstacles in national development, have reinforced our awareness of our geopolitical condition of being one of the countries that border the basin of the Pacific Ocean. It is indeed becoming more and more likely, that Asian countries will become near neighbors to us.

As has often been the case in the history of the world, the routes of trade are the routes of culture. Trade has not only a material weight, but is also a bearer of symbols and values, and is instrumental in establishing and strengthening cultural bonds. The mutual understanding of nations with different cultural roots, is a source of reciprocal spiritual enrichment and a contribution to world peace. We should not allow that commercial interchanges remain limited to only that. We understand of course that the initial difficulties may be comparatively higher where the differences in language and/or cultural traditions are large. But the gain to be expected is of such inestimable value that it is well worth the effort.

This is why we regard the relations with the cultural institutions of the Republic of Korea as very important, and why we feel that they should not remain restricted to commercial, development or natural science fields, but should embrace the various aspects of language, culture, literature, history and art. We understand perfectly well that the resources available set a limit to what is feasible, also in these regards. But the example of long standing cooperation projects with other countries, and their mutual beneficial results show that a patient endeavour will eventually repay. This is one of the reasons why the Rector of the Catholic University, together with other academic authorities, regard with great interest the steps that have taken by our Instituto de Letras toward establishing academic cooperation with the University of Korea.

This cooperation might find other fields in the future. I hope that you may have the opportunity to get an overall view of our University in the course of your visit, and that you may be interested in getting acquainted with some of the written information on organization, research and teaching. This University was founded by the Catholic Church one hundred years ago. It has at present a little over ten thousand students in Santiago, and about five thousand, distributed in several province branches. We have Faculties in the various branches of human, social and natural sciences, and, according to the model usual in Latin America, we have Faculties for most of the traditional professions, such as Law, Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, etc. We are as active as we can in research. In Natural Sciences about 25% of the research produced in Chilean laboratories is produced here, which is not an unconsiderable record, from the moment that Chile has the highest scientific output per inhabitant in the Latin American continent. I am sure that many of our Departments and Research groups would greatly benefit from relations to their counterparts in Korea, and it cannot be doubted that complementary or collaborative studies in matters, for instance, as public health, marine resources, seismic engineering, economics, to name only a few, should offer avenues for cooperation.

This year, our University celebrates its centenary, and we feel that a proper way - not of closing the first century, but rather of opening the second - would be to strengthen our international relations. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you in the name of the University and I hope that you will allow me to present you with two small tokens of our appreciation. One is the medal of the centenary, and the

other is a book edited by our University and containing the reproductions of some very little known works of religious art from the colonial times, which have remained for centuries confined to cloisters and inaccessible to the general public. The book and the medal have a symbolic meaning of their own in that they represent part of our christian heritage, which is one further and very direct bond with a considerable portion of the korean people, where the flourishing development of christianity bears an additional witness to the spirit of Korea, full of tolerance and open to all horizons of the search and endeavor of man.