

Banquet Speech

Herbert S. Gasser's speech at the Nobel Banquet in Stockholm, December 10, 1945

Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The pleasure of the moment could only be augmented had it been possible for more of the group of which I am a member to have been able to accept the invitation to be here today, and to join with me in bringing messages of friendship from the United States of America. Their wish to come can have been no less than mine. Together, a year ago today, we participated in a most unusual event in which six Nobel awards in science were presented to residents in our country, - in a ceremony that because of the troubled times took place in New York City. In all solemnity, in the name of his Majesty, the King of Sweden, the prizes were distributed by the Swedish Minister to the United States at a luncheon meeting arranged by the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

So high is the world-wide esteem of the judgments of the Nobel Committees, that there could not fail to be present a pardonable element of national rejoicing. It was something far different, however, that caused the occasion to be one never to be forgotten. Chords were struck in which there sounded in harmony sympathetic vibrations between your country and ours, resonant with our mutual love of learning, tolerance, freedom, and peace. And there were overtones of good will that caused the whole, in the ears of a war torn world, to seem to mount to a hymn to the international ideal to which Alfred Nobel devoted his life and his fortune.

By happy chance the selection fell to me to express over the radio the gratitude of four of my colleagues and myself. You will recall that Professor [Dam](#) of Denmark also took part. When the greetings of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, and of Professor [Svedberg](#) began to come forth with beautiful clarity from the loud speakers in the reception room, Sweden indeed seemed near to us. Still, after the words of Professor Svedberg, one felt very deeply that what we wanted to say could only be said adequately if we could have the privilege of grasping you by the hand as we told of our indebtedness.

Through the gracious invitation to attend these ceremonies, the satisfaction of our desire has become possible. But now that I am here, and the heart would speak, it cannot find the words. May I therefore say, quite simply, I thank you.

From [Les Prix Nobel en 1944](#), Editor Arne Holmberg, [Nobel Foundation], Stockholm, 1945