

Club of Rome associations

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CANADA is the latest country to have formed a national association inspired by the Club of Rome. The decision was made at a meeting in Toronto early in May, and the venture has the backing of an impressive array of government and business officials.

The association's objects are "to promote study and discussion among all segments of the Canadian public of the nature of world problems and the need to develop new policies, attitudes and courses of action to ensure a stable and viable future for mankind . . ." More specifically, it will attempt to identify Canada's role in the solution of world problems, and the implications for Canada of possible world solutions.

Both the co-founders of the Club of Rome, Dr Aurelio Peccei of Italy and Dr Alexander King, who until recently was with the OECD in Paris, attended the Toronto meeting, which was opened with a welcoming letter from Canada's Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. From their accounts it was apparent that the club—largely through the impact of the MIT study it sponsored, *The Limits of Growth*—had made considerable progress in directing attention to world problems since its inception in 1968.

One reason for thinking so, as suggested by Dr Peccei, is the establishment of a series of United Nations Conferences for discussion of world problems such as population, food, energy and materials. Another is the organisation in many nations of groups like the Club of Rome.

As described by Dr King, these included a whole diversity of approaches. The first was set up in Holland, which according to King is not surprising, because of its twin problems of dense population and heavy industrialisation. The Dutch association is a group of private people gathered in a nonparty organisation.

The second—also not surprisingly, for the same reasons—was organised in Japan, on a different basis, backed by and formed as a committee of the techno-economic society. Groups in other countries include some not connected with the Club of Rome but interested in similar problems (for example, Great Britain and Austria), and luncheon clubs and groups of engineers or teachers in France, Denmark, Belgium and Sweden.

Finland has formed a more formal study group to determine what the role should be of a small, progressive country in the modern world; Switzerland, with four Club members, invited four government members to discuss



BENEATH the elegant tapestries of the Schlosshotel, Kronberg, Germany a small group of biologists, philosophers and psychiatrists gathered recently to constitute the Boehringer Ingelheim Symposium on the Creative Process in Science and Medicine. Pictured above, listening to Sir John Eccles testify are, in the front row, Sir Hans Krebs, Jacques Monod, Manfred Eigen, Desmond Morris and Sir Karl Popper. What leads to some scientists being creative way above the average, and does the creativity of scientists bear any resemblance to that of artists and composers? Participants were decidedly coy about speaking other than in the abstract, despite Krebs's personal example of trying to piece together how he came to produce

new ideas. All seemed agreed that breaking out from conventional thinking was a major ingredient in creativity—the agreement was so complete that it must qualify as conventional thinking and therefore . . . Monod discussed 'subjective simulation'—a process almost of putting yourself in the position of the electron or whatever that you are thinking about. The debt of many participants to Popper was clearly great—an interesting contrast with the world of physical science where one's impression is that there is less understanding of what he is about. Desmond Morris had probably the nicest story to tell—A journalist once asked Picasso: What is creativity? 'I don't know, and if I did I wouldn't tell you.'

Club of Rome thinking and found them receptive to the points where they decided that both the traditional political organisation and neutrality of the country was obsolete.

But Dr King found some of the keenest interest in an unexpected place: South Africa. I was in South Africa recently, he said, "and, much to my surprise, found the Club of Rome better known in that country than in any other." Some citizens there have formed an independent information group who just meet and talk.

The Canadian Association for the Club of Rome has applied for a charter as a corporation without share

capital. Its first directors include the president of the pulp and paper industry's research institute, Dr Pierre R. Gendron; Senator Maurice Lamontagne, whose senate committee carried out one of the most comprehensive studies of national science policy yet made; a retired oil company executive, Mr Ronald Ritchie; the president of the Ontario Research Foundation, Dr William Stadelman; the former Chief Science Adviser to the Federal Cabinet, now Dean of Applied Sciences at Queen's University, Dr Robert J. Uffen; and a senior civil servant with many years experience in Canadian Science policy, Dr J. Rennie Whitehead.