

**Zeitschrift:** IABSE congress report = Rapport du congrès AIPC = IVBH  
Kongressbericht

**Band:** 2 (1936)

**Rubrik:** E. Ceremonial closure

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## CEREMONIAL CLOSURE FEIERLICHER SCHLUSSAKT CLÔTURE SOLENNELLE

Congress Room of the German Museum

Munich, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1936, 11 a. m.

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## Summary of the speech delivered by

**Adolf Wagner,**

Gauleiter und Staatsminister, Munich.

Gauleiter and Minister of State *Adolf Wagner* welcomed the visitors in his capacity as Head of the Supreme Building Authority in Bavaria and Gauleiter of the National Socialist Movement, and drew their attention to the fact that in Munich they were on historic ground with regard to the new Reich, since the Movement which alone rendered it possible to reconstruct the new Reich in its present shape had been set on foot from here by the Führer, *Adolf Hitler*. From here, too, developed the modern German building style — as incorporated in the works of the unforgettable *Paul Ludwig Troost* — here in Munich the Führer also found in *Dr. Todt* the right man to build *Adolf Hitler's* new roads. Munich is not only the capital of the Movement but also the metropolis of German art and known all over the world for its gaiety and hospitality. Here the visitors to the Congress had every opportunity of getting into touch with the new spirit and of studying National Socialist aims and achievements. And after seeing what National Socialist Munich had to show them, they would surely retain pleasant memories of the city.



The official representatives of the following countries made short speeches expressing the thanks of their respective governments to the German Reich, the German Organising Committee and the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering:

Albania  
Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Brazil  
British India  
Bulgaria  
China  
Columbia  
Cuba  
Czechoslovakia  
Danzig  
Denmark  
Egypt  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Great Britain  
Greece  
Holland  
Hungary  
Italy  
Japan  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Mexico  
Netherlands Indies  
Norway  
Paraguay  
Poland  
Roumania  
Sweden  
South Africa  
Switzerland  
Turkey  
Uruguay  
U.S.A.  
Yugoslavia

## Prof. Dr. A. Rohn,

Président du Conseil de l'Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale à Zurich,

Président de l'Association Internationale des Ponts et Charpentes.

*Gentlemen of Bavaria and the City of Munich,*

*General Inspector and Congress President,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

We have almost reached the close of the second Congress of our International Association. In eloquent words the representatives of a large number of states have spoken of their impressions of hospitality in the German Reich and the work done there by our German colleagues. I now venture to *sum up* briefly the impressions gathered, if only for the purpose of having them included in our Association's archives with the minutes of this meeting.

At the Opening Meeting in the Reichstag Conference Hall in Berlin the close contact between the headquarters of the Association and the German Organising Committee revealed that this Congress was prepared in a thorough and exemplary manner. And it has been carried through every bit as efficiently as it was prepared. Seldom has a scientific congress combined hard work with excursions, inspections and social gatherings in such a well-balanced way as this one. Last evening, in fun, I mentioned the inevitable signs of fatigue.

Permit me to summarise briefly the *main events* of this assembly:

During the week between October 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> nine working meetings were held, all of which were well attended. The well considered resolutions submitted to the Final Meeting in Berlin bear testimony to the amount and quality of the work done. I want to thank the German Organising Committee for the *technical preparation of the working meetings*. My thanks are also due to the experts of 20 nations who, in response to the appeal of our Secretaries General, contributed articles to Preliminary Publication and papers to the discussions. I thank our Secretaries General and Technical Advisers for their hard and unstinted work of the past few months. One must have been in the thick of it oneself during this brief period of Congress preparation to be able to realise what it means to publish a Preliminary Publication of more than 1600 printed pages in three languages. I thank the German Organising Committee for their substantial financial assistance, which enabled this Preliminary Publication to be published in all three languages and now enables us to issue the Final Report. I thank the printers, *Dr. Wolf & Son*, of Munich, for the excellent *printing work* in three languages which they achieved in so short a time. And, finally, I thank all our collaborators at headquarters in Zurich who have performed so much strenuous work during these last months.

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Difficulties of no lesser magnitude than those connected with the actual preparation of the scientific Congress were presented by its *organisation* in Ger-

many — this in view of the magnificent frame proposed for it by the German Government and the President of the Congress, Inspector-General *Dr. Todt*.

At the opening ceremony of our Congress in Berlin, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, I mentioned the words in which the Chancellor of the Reich recently described *Dr. Todt's* activities. Now that we have been able to view some of his creations near Berlin and Dresden, between Schleiz and Bayreuth, and, finally, between Munich and Berchtesgaden, our colleagues from abroad will certainly share the opinion expressed by the Chancellor. In the organisation of this Congress, too, *Dr. Todt* has all through drawn upon the two aspects of his character, viz. the ideal cultural and the practical-realistic, which distinguish him as a road constructor. We should like to thank him most cordially for all he has done and had done. It is to him, in the first place, that we owe the splendidly smooth functioning of this assembly, its scientific successes and its spiritual and cultural influence, which has touched each of us personally.

All the time during this assembly you have been able to observe, among *Dr. Todt's* collaborators, the never-failing devotion of Ministerial Councillor *Schütte*. Obliging and courteous, he has been ever ready to help and to smooth the way. His closest collaborators, too, Messrs. *Sommerer* and *Langner*, have earned our warmest thanks for their splendid work.

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In this expression of gratitude to our German colleagues I wish to include the name of that prominent German bridge-builder, Privy Councillor *Dr. Schaper*. Let me express here the recognition of the Congress for this revolutionary achievements.

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On the evening of October 1<sup>st</sup> we were the guests of the City of Berlin. The consequence of that congenial evening was that we at once began to feel at home on German soil. Next day we were the guests of the Inspector General for German Roads and the Director General of German Railways. That evening, spent in the regally appointed halls of the Kroll Opera House, revealed to us our hosts' love and understanding of art; it also showed us that in the German Reich the *rail* and the *road* co-operate most harmoniously in the *realm of bridge-building*.

On the afternoon of October 3<sup>rd</sup> we had a choice of seeing either the latest bridges constructed in the neighbourhood of Berlin, or the huge Reich Sports Field.

On Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, the majority of our Congress members paid a visit to the Lock at Niederfinow, completed two years ago and enabling barges of 1000 tons to negotiate a difference in height of 36 metres.

On Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, only a restricted number of Congress members, of course, could witness the inauguration of the Rügen Dam across Strela Sound. On this occasion, too, Director General *Dr. Dorpmüller* was kind enough to mention our international association of bridge-builders. Here, too, Congress members were honoured by an extremely kind welcome on the part of the German Railway Authorities. On the same evening we were the guests of the German Government in the National Opera House and treated to a brilliant performance of the "Rosenkavalier".

On Thursday evening a number of Congress members were able to attend the opening of the 1936/37 Winter Aid in the huge Deutschlandhalle and witness there the completeness with which the Führer of the German nation transmitted his impulse to his people.

On Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, we began our beautiful journey through Saxony, Thuringia and Bavaria. First of all we were received, in just the same hospitable manner as in Berlin, by the Lord Mayor of Dresden in the Town Hall; then, after some sightseeing in Dresden and its surroundings, we spent the evening at a performance of "Die Fledermaus" in the Opera House, and the character of the opera just matched our own jolly mood.

On Friday various sections of the German Motor Roads between Dresden and Bayreuth were inspected. At the Saale Bridge we were able to get a glimpse of a large stone bridge under construction. Everywhere along the route, just as yesterday on the trip from Munich to the frontier, we could observe the outstanding technical feats accomplished in the construction of these Motor Roads, and in addition the effective manner in which the highway is fitted into the natural beauties of the landscape. It may be stated that a drive over the German Motor Roads is in the first place one of scenic enjoyment. But in order to pass just judgment on this question one must first hear Dr. *Todt's* own explanations of the many various artistic aspects of primary importance.

In Bayreuth we were unfortunately only able to imbibe the Wagnerian atmosphere for a very short spell. And finally, in Berchtesgaden, where an overcast sky veiled the beauties of nature, a general desire was expressed to re-visit this lovely spot in Upper Bavaria as soon as possible and to make its closer acquaintance when it is unveiled.

Last evening Bavaria and Munich revealed themselves in their hospitable, artistic and genial character to those members of the Congress as yet unacquainted with these qualities. This final evening formed a grand finale to the receptions which have distinguished this Congress.

Finally, we are holding our today's closing meeting in the Congress Hall of the world-famed German Museum which, in a manner that is perhaps unique, represents the evolution of engineering. We are grateful for being allowed to close an engineering congress in this house.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The history of the Second Congress which I have just summarised is as well known to you as it is to me. The reason why I have put it down on paper is, as I have already mentioned, because it is to have its place of honour in the proceedings of our Association.

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

We have received the impression that everywhere in the German Reich we were given a special welcome as constructors and bridge-builders because the fundamental idea of our work so well matches the reconstructive will of the Third Reich, and because — as was particularly pointed out last evening by the Prime Minister — there is at present a special need for that spiritual bridge-building furthered, outside the sphere of politics, by scientists and practitioners.

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In grateful recognition of the splendid organisation and carrying through of this Congress by the organs of the German Reich, I believed myself to be acting on your behalf when, yesterday, I sent the following telegram from Berchtesgaden to the Chancellor of the Reich:

"Before the closing of the ten-day Congress of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering I have the honour and the pleasure to express the sincere and respectful thanks of this Association — and in particular of its 600 foreign Congress members — for all the measures taken in Germany to ensure the splendid success of this Congress. This association of engineers is especially grateful for the opportunity provided it of viewing at close quarters the roads and other constructions of the Third Reich; these constructional feats have found the highest recognition everywhere as a magnificent combination of traffic organisation and creation of labour.

On behalf of the International Association  
for Bridge and Structural Engineering:

The President: *Rohn.*"

Already last evening I received the following reply:

"Professor *Rohn*, Regina-Palace Hotel, Munich.

My sincere thanks to the International Association of Bridge and Structural Engineering for the words of greeting which you, Professor, have transmitted to me. May the past days have shown all participants that the new Third Reich is putting forth all its strength to create works of order, of progress and of peace. With this in mind I greet all the participants in the assembly now closed.

signed: *Adolf Hitler.*"

We are especially indebted to the Chancellor of the Reich for having replied to our telegram of thanks with these kind words of greeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there remains but one more thing for me to do, and that is to bid you goodbye and good luck until our next Congress, which — God willing — will be held in 1940. Several invitations have already been received. You will be informed as to the place and date of our next meeting as soon as ever possible.

With this, its second Congress, behind it, our Association looks into the future with renewed strength and fortitude. May the future preserve this strength for us and develop our Association into a fount of ever-growing international spiritual and cultural co-operation.

Relatively speaking, the duration of this Congress was long; however, thanks to the splendid organisation and hospitality accorded none of our members has felt that it was lasting too long — on the contrary, we were enabled thereby to form very valuable and profound contacts, above all of a personal character. Incidentally, there has seldom been a congress of such a length that held together so compactly till the end.

Rest assured, my dear German colleagues, that we are all leaving your country filled with gratitude and with the desire to extend still further the relationships now formed.

## Dr. Ing. F. Todt,

Generalinspektor für das deutsche Straßenwesen, Berlin  
Präsident des Deutschen Organisationsausschusses.

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress for Bridge and Structural Engineering has come to an end with Prof. *Dr. A. Rohn's* speech.

Experts from all parts of the world have exchanged experiences and furthered practical knowledge of bridge building during these days of intensive work. After completion of our task we had some social intercourse and were thus able to get into closer personal touch with one another in pleasant hours of relaxation.

On the occasion of the opening of the Rügen Dam you saw the manner in which the new Germany is making use of the results of her work. At the "Deutschlandhalle" you had the experience of seeing the Führer of our people communicating with his fellow-countrymen and calling upon the united people for a united effort. It was a very great pleasure for us Germans to observe the interest with which you followed these German events.

Having interrupted your journey at Dresden and Munich, you were most probably impressed by the numerous and varied ways in which German culture also expresses itself outside the metropolis of the Reich.

The Reich Motor Roads may have given you an idea of the firm determination with which the German people tackle and carry out the tasks set them by their great Führer. I wish to thank you once more for the unflagging attention which you devoted to everything that the new Germany had to show you. I thank you, too, for the words spoken on every occasion in praise and recognition of the work done in connection with the organisation of the Congress — sentiments most sincerely expressed in Prof. *Rohn's* speech just delivered.

If Germany endeavoured to organise the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress for Bridge and Structural Engineering in a worthy manner, there were two good reasons for this. The first was the example given by the work of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering at Zurich. With this example the International Association set the German Organisation Executive a standard which did not allow it to remain behind the Association's eager and tireless work, its dignified and purposeful bearing.

We recognized immediately, during the first days of our meeting with Prof. *Rohn*, the high standard which would be required for the Congress of this International Association in particular, and so, after all, we did nothing more than find a form of expression for the work done, above all by our esteemed President, Prof. *Rohn*, and his Secretaries General, Prof. *Karner* and Prof. *Ritter*, together with the other gentlemen of the International Association, in never ceasing labour and by quiet but nevertheless harassing efforts, to ensure for the Congress the

complete success which has now been attained. The excellence of the intellectual standard is entirely due to their efforts — our task was simply to provide a form.

Our second reason for organising this Congress in an adequate way was the high esteem in which Engineering in general is again held in the new Germany — in contrast to former times. Germany has recourse to engineering in all its branches for her reconstructional work. When one of the most important International Engineering Associations does us the honour of holding its congress in Germany, when engineering experts from all parts of the world come to Germany, then it must be our aim to testify to the importance the new Germany attaches to engineering itself, the men connected with it and their work.

This high esteem has also been expressed in very eloquent fashion by the telegram received from the Führer.

That is all I have to say. I am in honour bound to thank all persons and institutions which by their collaboration and hospitality have helped to make this Congress a success. It has ended as successfully as it began. I have heard from a large number of representatives that this Congress will always remain a pleasant memory and now that we are about to part, these words encourage me to hope that we shall meet again in due course in another country, with more work and new tasks before us.

I close this Congress with my best wishes to yourselves and the countries you represent.

A pleasant journey home and "Auf Wiedersehen" at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress.