

Closing remarks

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In the name of all participants of the Symposium, which has now come to its closure, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland for having organized this meeting, and for having selected as timely topic the problems arising from the pollution of the North Sea. I think we have also to congratulate Professor KINNE with his very modern attitude in this respect. It is not so very long ago, that there existed a sharp differentiation between pure science and applied science. In some institutes – among them marine biological stations – scientists said, when questions with practical aspects arose: “Please, don’t bother us; we are carrying out pure science investigations; we do not know what will come out of it, or wherefore we will use the results obtained, but it hasn’t been done, and therefore it is important.” This attitude is changing now, so we can blend together those working on applied science and those working in the field of pure science. I think this is a necessity, and we are very grateful that you, Professor KINNE, as Director of the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland, take the leading part in this regard. I think it gives us hope for the future, for the very problem that we were tackling this week, the question of marine pollution, concerns above all the North Sea. It is in the first place the conservation of the natural resources of the North Sea, the fishery resources in particular, we have at heart. We need a concerted action in this, and if we took the attitude of pure conservation of nature, we would place ourselves on too high a level. The authorities interested in the economical development of the industry would then say: “Well, a small group of naturalists tells us not to lead any waste into the sea, but we simply have to go ahead”. Waste disposal may, however, lead to irreversible changes in the natural habitat. At a given moment, when spawning grounds or nursery grounds for species of economic importance have been destroyed, return to the former favourable conditions is no longer possible.

Therefore, we are all very grateful to you, Professor KINNE, for inviting us here and selecting this very topic, and we wish you all the best for the future and we hope, and feel sure, that you will help us in regard to this project in the first place. Thank you very much also for your kind hospitality, and for all the work you did to ensure that everything went so smoothly. We even hear that our papers will be published within 7 months time, which will be a great achievement. I also want to thank your very able secretariat, and the interpreters who helped us to understand each other so well.

Thank you very much, indeed.