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Remarks Prepared by Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman,
United States Atomic Energy Commission,
For Delivery At The Founders' Day Dinner,
National Association of Science Writers,
On Thursday, September 16, 1954,
New York, New York.

I come before this audience with a feeling of particular humility. In the presence of the distinguished persons who are included in this gathering, it would be more fitting and profitable that I should listen than that I should speak. For I am told that there are among you this evening perhaps more Nobel Laureates than ever before have come together under one roof and that very nearly every one of you is a medallist, past or potential. I should also walk humbly with those of you who are the writers about science.

Science-writing is a very old profession. Science probably separated from witchcraft when science-writing began. Just so long as information was passed along by word of mouth only, it was always susceptible to control by a few for their own benefit and to mystify the many. When it began to be written about, science came up out of the atmosphere of the cauldron and the alembic.

An astonishing amount of early science-writing has been preserved. Since it must clearly have had an original bulk much smaller than the aggregate of ancient religious literature, plus general belles-lettres, it is remarkable how substantial a portion of the surviving works of antiquity deal with physics, mathematics, astronomy and medicine. Perhaps those who possessed such manuscripts in ancient times set greater than ordinary store by their safekeeping.

factor in liver to the isolation and production of the pure substance.

Dr. Lawrence Hafstad, whom all of you surely know, happens to be speaking, today, in Brussels before the Congress of Industrial Chemistry. He heads the Reactor Development Division of the Atomic Energy Commission. Therefore, he expects to be asked, "How soon will you have industrial atomic electric power in the United States?" His answer is "from 5 to 15 years, depending upon the vigor of the development effort." Our time scale can fold like an accordion.

Transmutation of the elements, -- unlimited power, ability to investigate the working of living cells by tracer atoms, the secret of photosynthesis about to be uncovered, -- these and a host of other results all in 15 short years. It is not too much to expect that our children will enjoy in their homes electrical energy too cheap to meter, -- will know of great periodic regional famines in the world only as matters of history, -- will travel effortlessly over the seas and under them and through the air with a minimum of danger and at great speeds, -- and will experience a lifespan far longer than ours, as disease yields and man comes to understand what causes him to age. This is the forecast for an age of peace.

And as for war, which we dread increasingly because of its added horrors, let me conclude by quoting Sir George Thomson of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

"But perhaps this increasing dread of war," he said, "does really mean that our code is growing out of date and that war will join slavery as one of the things that are no longer avowed. Not, alas, that are no longer done. The only slave owners now are States and they call it by another name. I am not entirely convinced that the world will be a better place if the long accepted right and duty of a man to fight for his country, and of his country to fight for its rights, is transformed into an obligation to serve in a punishment squad directed against a nation or a class by some central committee. But if a change in the moral code does come about, atomic energy" -- and I would be more inclusive and say "science" -- "will have been one of the major causes."