This meeting of the Society is auspicious for a number of reasons. Firstly, it has rightly come of age in that this is the 21st Annual General Meeting. Perhaps I should pause a moment at this point to recall those comparatively untroubled days when the principal concern of the founding fathers and grandfathers (for that is indeed what we have become) was to provide a forum for people interested in the science of limnology, to gather together from a diversity of places within Southern Africa and countries to the north of the Zambezi and hear about the studies which took place during the year of failures and successes. We have enjoyed the company and converse of such luminaries in our science as E B Worthington, Julian Rzoska, Jack Talling, Brian Moss, Clifford Mortimer, to mention but a few, and we have seen the development of limnological training and research in the subcontinent such that, notwithstanding our relative isolation from the mainstream of limnological thinking, those characteristics of semi-arid limnology are being recognized as presenting problems and solutions altogether different from what might be expected from the more classical theory of the northern temperate zones.

Secondly, we are meeting in conjunction with the Southern Hemisphere Limnology Symposium, itself a product of our joint realization that the limnology of the southern hemisphere, and in particular its semi-arid belt, demands peculiar knowledge and understanding. The crippling droughts which the land masses of the southern hemisphere have experienced to varying degrees during the past five years are testimony to the rather poor image which limnologists in such lands possess: we cannot make rain and we are not very good at building structures to catch the surface flow resulting from the rain when it comes, so it could be argued with some force that we are like many of the animals and plants of earth - an endangered species! Indeed if government attitudes towards limnology and the research it generates continues, we may reasonably expect some elemental scrap of a limnologist in the next millennium to be subject to DNA characterization like the Quagga remnant which has caught the public eye in recent weeks: interesting but quite impossible to reconstruct.

In my last address to you I stressed the need to identify those areas of limnological research which would contribute directly to understanding by politicians and decision makers of those aquatic issues which will materially affect not only the supply of water, but its quality. We have tried very hard to do this and I am pleased to report that in a number of areas the response by the planners and user agencies has been heartening. However, a consequence of the critical drought has been a good deal of crisis management involving immediately important engineering solutions to the supply of water to power stations in the Eastern Transvaal. Concomitant with these has been a major review of our country's water resources and demands into the new millennium. This review involves serious consideration of the Lesotho Highlands scheme which will materially curtail the flow of the Orange River and reverse the flow of the Vaal River so that the industrial heartland of the Republic will never be at risk. While it is inconceivable that any limnologist will deny the causes of such development, made more acute by the present serious interruption of our hydrological cycle, we can and must argue for an independent assessment of the biological effects of such material changes to the country's major rivers and reservoirs. Re-use of water and river translocation bring their own special problems, and for the sake of completeness I will emphasize some of the more obvious which as limnologists we have been at pains to stress ad nauseam:

1. Mineralization
2. Eutrophication
3. Suspensoids
4. Intercatchment transfer of aquatic invertebrate vectors or intermediate hosts of parasites and pathogens of man and his animals
5. Destruction or serious modification of unique riverine or estuarine habitats.

South Africa's cooperative research programme has been a powerful source of environmental good, but it remains to be seen if the results of the research it supports can be quickly and effectively fed back into the mainstream of urban and rural development. A difficulty which many of us see is the welter of administrative filters through which research results and recommendations have to pass. The
consequence is a material reduction of their final impact: the need for direct communication between the genesis of understanding and the legislative authority has never been more urgent.

But this is not the only difficulty I leave you with as I step down from this presidential podium. I refer to the comparative costs which are used in argument against the real viability of any limnological project. For example, we hear that the hydroelectricity generated by the P K le Roux Dam [Vanderkloof] is worth some R12 x 10^6 to Escom- the fishery which has recently developed may, if it is lucky, generate a mere R150 000 per year. Clearly to preach the gospel of multipurposeness will be heavily, if not overwhelmingly, weighted in favour of hydroelectricity -this being the most efficient use of the potential energy stored behind the dam. My argument depends, not only upon the realization of this irrefutable fact, but ensuring that those other packets of potential energy which are locked up daily in the photosynthetic units of the lake, provide the energy base for an array of kinetic processes, some good and some bad. The evolution of hydroelectrical engineering design has occupied the minds of physicists, engineers and mathematicians since the time of Faraday; a similar intensity of interest into the potential of the other benefits of stored water (for example) has tended towards fisheries development: in essence the next best thing. But this ad hoc approach throughout the world has been singularly ineffective -granted we do harvest fish and some, more by accident than design, prove to be a winner (Limnothrissa in Lake Kariba). But how much more pertinent could our understanding of the metabolism of lakes and rivers become if we learn to spell out the problems with greater clarity and realize that the engineering sophistication represented by the hydroelectric turbine did not arise immaculate in concept, design and function overnight. So with our search for perfection in our own science we will have to think clearly, design boldly and express our function in strong unequivocal lines.

I do not wish to leave you with the impression that our limnological work has been merely data collection. My view of the South African literature is that it has moved away from this approach into a more dynamic analysis of ecological processes in freshwater and in the equally exciting interface between rivers and the sea, namely the estuary. Granted our attention has been drawn to these areas by the increasing rate of eutrophication of our reservoirs, and the implications inherent in reduced freshwater inflow into estuaries, either as a result of natural drought or man-made manipulation of the mean annual run off? It is significant that no answers could be given to the responsible government departments without the development of the research approach to which I have alluded. In my view this demonstrates unequivocally that there are no short, quick and reliable answers to environmental questions. To be sure there are answers, but they are wrested from the nexus of reaction and interaction which make up the aquatic ecosystem by dint of the most devoted and dedicated work.

The Society's membership has fallen somewhat since last year. We have lost 12 ordinary members, two corporate members and gained one subscriber - in all a decrease of four percent. But there have been only three resignations and 12 new members were accepted. The decrease is due very largely to members defaulting on subscriptions. We do hope that we can reduce this type of loss. The finances of the Society are sound and we are managing to keep pace with inflation, although for how long is difficult to say. Your outgoing Executive and Council and I must presume, the newly appointed Executive, will need your continued support during the next two years if we are to retain financial viability. I am confident that all members will respond positively to any call to help the Society. There are many ways in which this can be done. One of the most important is to become a regional representative, but if you feel this office is not to your liking, support the work of your regional representative by being an active member. Insist upon regional activities and make certain you are part of them!

Not only does the present Executive retire, but as you are aware, Pieter Keulder has decided to step down as Editor, and Council has proposed that Professor Keulder be awarded honorary life membership of the Society in recognition of the sterling work which he has done over many years while being ably assisted by his wife. Without Pieter’s careful attention to the detail required of the editorship, and more particularly in the formative years, our journal would have been unable to flourish. Dit is dan vir my 'n besondere eer om Professor Keulder te vra om die lewenslidmaatskap van die Vereniging te ontvang.

Finally, I wish to stress the great importance I have always attached to the fact that this is a Southern African Society. Thus we must endeavour to maintain our multinational composition and strengthen the links which bind the whole society. For this reason I am particularly pleased that the next congress will
be in Cape Town. South African freshwater studies had their origin in the streams of the Western Cape, so that it is fitting that we should return to these productive roots. I hope that, therefore, we will be able to entertain the possibility of returning to subtropical and tropical Africa, another area where work of major significance to the limnology of the subcontinent has been done.

Thank you for the privilege of serving the Society as President for the past two years and for the distinct honour Council paid me when they awarded the gold medal of the Society in 1983. My colleagues on Council and Executive have served with devotion, and a special thank you is required to Professor R C Hart who has performed the duties of Secretary with such consummate skill and efficiency. My best wishes to our new Executive and Council, and in particular to Mark Chutter who has been elected to a fourth term of office. Knowing how busy he is, I can only express our sincere thanks to him for being so willing to guide the Society yet again.

--B R Allanson