

*Introductory Remarks of William H. Avery, Jr., President at our  
25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting April 30, 1952*

The Vice Chancellor of Oxford University recently said: "The greatest need of modern times is to put youth in touch with greatness."

This has been the prime objective of The Economic Club since its organization in 1927. The Club has sought to provide the environment in which young men, through contact with great men might be stimulated to leadership in Chicago and the nation.

During the 25 year history of the Club, through boom, depression, recovery, War and armed peace, the members have been challenged by the speeches of the outstanding representatives of management, labor, the professions, the universities, the armed forces and our own and foreign governments. The Club has listened to both sides of the important issues of the day, believing that one profits by hearing the opponents, as well as the proponents of one's own views.

But the founders of the Club wisely believed that leadership is not merely stimulated by listening to speeches. They conceived the chief function of the Club to be that of providing a means whereby the present business and civic leaders of Chicago might meet the potential leaders of the following generation and pass on to them their business and civic ideas and ideals, to the end that our community and country may be made a better place in which all may work and live.

By personal contact, we want many a young member to say of an older member the words which Samuel Johnson applied to Edmund Burke: "He stirs my powers."

How well this process of selection and stimulation has worked is best illustrated by the fact that the young men who were elected to the Club in its early years are now recognized as our leading executives and the backbone of our civic, charitable and educational institutions. And now, through the informal opportunities provided by the Club, the present younger members are being selected for responsibilities which they must take over from the older members. If the Club served no other purpose, this alone would justify its continuation in the years to come.