

*Copy of the speech at the opening of the Third International Significal Summer Conference by Jhr. Dr. C. J. A. de Ranitz, Head of the Section University Education and Sciences of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences.*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is most gratifying to me to be able, on behalf of the Royal Netherlands Government, to welcome so many distinguished scientists from so many countries. The Netherlands people, through the years past, have always endeavoured to further the idea of international understanding, and we therefore consider ourselves fortunate that your conference is held within our borders.

Your science — I need scarcely say so — has been cultivated in our country with effect. I only remind you of the “Significal Meditations” by Jacob Israël de Haan and of the “Significa” by Frederic van Eeden, who, by your science, was inspired to poetic thoughts, which, expressed in sonnets, he dedicated to Lady Welby. As a matter of fact at present time too, the Significal Science has many outstanding promoters in our country.

As a layman in your branch of science, I can nor may enter into details of the proceedings of this conference. I may but notice, here on Dutch territory, with great pleasure, that according to the prospectus of the conference, you are striving effectively for international cultural collaboration. Besides, in my opinion, it seems to be very rejoicing that at this meeting special attention will be bestowed on educational problems in international co-operation, whereby experience, an eminently costly good, will be put above learning. Would not the world have a more hopeful outlook, if an open eye were kept for this wisdom?

Therefore I am right in saying that your congress considers it as one of its main tasks to contribute to the study of the conditions of significal communication and thereby to promote human understanding. With you, I am convinced, that a study of the fundamental scientific notions and a critical consideration of the principles of science may help us to abandon the chauvinistic and nationalistic mentality which, during the past years, has brought us into a chaos, and to attain an objective and international attitude of which our world is so much in need.

Trusting that your meeting will contribute to a better mutual understanding, I declare, in the name of the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences, this conference opened.