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Foreword

S. D. GARRETT—*Botany School, University of Cambridge, England*

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I am greatly privileged to have been invited by the editors to write a foreword to this symposium volume, which I am confident will receive quite as warm a welcome from plant pathologists, soil microbiologists, and all others interested in root diseases of crop plants as did its predecessor, *Ecology of Soil-borne Plant Pathogens*, edited by Kenneth F. Baker and William C. Snyder and published by the University of California Press in 1965.

This first symposium volume was the product of the first truly international and representative meeting of workers in our subject, which was held at the University of California at Berkeley over the period 7–13 April 1963. This was the most successful, stimulating, and enjoyable meeting I had ever attended; in the pleasant surroundings of the University campus, I was able to meet many old friends, and to get to know others whom before I had known only through their writings. No wonder that it was with great though private reluctance that I agreed to organize a second international meeting of root disease workers at Cambridge in 1968; I despaired of being able to maintain so high a standard. But fortune was kind to me, and I was spared so heavy a responsibility, as I shall now briefly recount.

On a Saturday morning of August 1964, during the Tenth International Botanical Congress, I was briefly basking in the sunshine in one of the ancient courts of Edinburgh University, comfortably reflecting that my not very arduous labours as Chairman of the Plant Pathology Sectional Committee were nearly over, when I noticed three people walking towards me. They were W. C. Snyder, J. G. Horsfall, and R. K. S. Wood, and they had come to tell me that there was a growing opinion amongst the plant pathologists attending this Congress that we should organize a First International Congress of Plant Pathology; we therefore called a meeting of all plant pathologists attending the Edinburgh Congress to discuss this proposition. The issue was never in doubt; in any meeting of this kind, where only a small minority feel themselves at risk of heavy administrative involvement in the undertaking, a substantial majority can always be relied upon to pass the proposal with acclamation, and so they did. In due course I was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee for the First International Congress of Plant Pathology, and I was thus in a

strong position to suggest, though perhaps I should more truthfully say to declare, that the successor to the Berkeley meeting should be incorporated with the First International Congress as one of its sections.

In order to prepare a programme for our section of Root Diseases and Soil-borne Pathogens, I first caught up with my reading of the literature, which is always in arrears, and then sought the advice of various friends who had helped to organize the Berkeley meeting. This advice was generously given, and from it I eventually selected titles for seven symposia, for which I chose seven introducers. Each introducer undertook to assume sole responsibility for his own symposium, with such help in advice as I could give, and I am deeply indebted to all of them for their excellent programmes; they were W. C. Snyder, R. Baker, N. T. Flentje, D. M. Griffin, J. Rishbeth, R. A. Fox, and S. Wilhelm. The chairmen of the various sessions are listed separately, and I should like to say that the outstanding success of the discussions in all the sessions (and I did not miss a single one of them) owed not a little to their skilful conduct of the meetings. In making these acknowledgements, however, I must not omit a more general one; the success of the Congress as a whole was due in large measure to the prolonged and heroic labours of R. K. S. Wood, as Secretary of the Executive Committee. In this he was ably assisted by B. E. J. Wheeler, as Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. An account of the Congress prepared by R. K. S. Wood will be published by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute in the Review of Applied Mycology.

For anyone of my generation, it is reassuring to be able to reflect that our branch of plant pathology, for so long held back by the formidable complexity of its problems, is now rapidly advancing. Although many workers and laboratories all over the world have taken part in this leap forward, no one can deny that much of the credit for these recent rapid advances, particularly over the last decade, must go to the Department of Plant Pathology of the University of California at Berkeley, under its Chairman, W. C. Snyder. It is thus particularly appropriate that this second international symposium volume on soil-borne plant pathogens is being published, like its predecessor, by the University of California Press. It has my good wishes, though it will have no need of them, and I am sure it will enjoy an equally resounding success.