

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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ALTHOUGH the annual conference of the Society is deliberately pitched at the research level, there is no reason why its other activities need to be so restricted. The Society's objects as stated are "to pool and exchange information concerning weeds and pests and their control". The periodic staging of summer field courses is indeed evidence that the Society already accepts some responsibility in the field of education. I suggest to you that we should — and undoubtedly could — extend our contribution in this field.

We have neither the facilities nor the capacity to support a full-scale extension service, but in a particular field we could, I am sure, provide help and encouragement where both seem badly needed. I refer to the situation where many people, either willingly or not, find themselves faced with giving advice on weed and pest control but feel inadequately trained to do so.

I understand that the Noxious Weeds Inspectors' Institute has already suggested the provision of refresher or training courses. I congratulate them on their initiative and point out that many other people also could benefit from such courses should they be set up. Opinions vary about who should be an adviser and who should not. I believe that few people when asked for advice relating to their occupation decline to give it — and once they begin to give advice they become advisers whether we like it or not.

The point I make is that there is a need for advice on weed and pest control, there are people already making the contacts needed to impart advice — and, above all, it is important to everyone that it be good advice. Large sums of money are spent annually on weed and pest control, much of the finance being raised through rates and taxes. The efficient utilization of these funds is therefore of truly national interest.

What can we do? The responsibility for organizing such a scheme obviously rests with official educational authorities. It might be the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education or the universities. The Technical Correspondence Institute is already making a notable contribution through its chemical applicators' course. So, although the course organization is not our function, we can, I believe, help significantly. I have in mind that, while successful courses of this nature demand a

great deal of technical support, the membership of this Society represents a wealth of such knowledge. You people know more about weed and pest control than any other group of similar size in the country. I am suggesting, therefore, that the organizers might utilize the talents of individuals who would contribute as members of this Society.

Certainly we have our day-to-day jobs to do, but I am confident that employing authorities would support such a scheme. It must be in the interests of official organizations to see educational levels raised, while industry can only gain from the more efficient use of its products.

Finally, let me suggest that any scheme which is launched must be actively promoted. I believe that knowledge must be "sold" like any other commodity. It is not enough, for instance, to say that the Department of Agriculture has all the necessary information on weed control (even if this were true) and that all people need to do is ask. If this were the answer, we would not have the problem which exists today.