

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS to 32nd Conference 1979

E.A. Upritchard

I would like to enlarge on two points already raised in the annual report.

The first follows up to my address last year concerning the society's position on the pesticide controversy.

The Society has become a member of the U.S. Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) with a view to copying some of their information to members, or if this proves too expensive, at least advising members of reports that are available and can be purchased from U.S.A. You should also be aware that some companies and libraries have these and other reports, some of which would be available on request.

Commercial interests have been actively promoting safe usage of pesticides, and a rational approach to pesticides, but I must agree with the Parliamentary Undersecretary of Agriculture, Mr R.G. Talbot, in his address to the Agricultural Chemical and Animal Remedies Manufacturers Association (AGCARM) that they are preaching only to the converted.

From the ANZAAS Conference I am strongly aware that similar concerns regarding a rational approach to pesticides are shared by the non-industry scientist.

As I see it, only the news media can spread the "what if" syndrome common to obstructionist groups, and only the news media can rationalise the balance. While some progress has been made it is still my grave concern that balanced opinion is still not apparent in media reporting. Our problems in putting a rational approach before the urban public will be difficult to resolve.

The second point concerns the formation of CASAS, the Commonwealth Association of Scientific Agricultural Societies in which the Society has been invited to participate under the umbrella of NZIAS.

The subject of collaboration with other societies has been the subject of several previous presidential addresses to our society.

We have continued to maintain our independence and rejected sessional topics considered to spread our interests too widely.

There is an undeniable need to co-operation between New Zealand agricultural societies; at the secretarial level simply to keep each other informed of planned meetings and activities, and at the more fundamental level of co-ordinating research priorities and programmes.

I suggest the formation of a N.Z. branch of CASAS may offer such an opportunity and leave it to the incoming executive to assess the potential for our society, and bring forward recommendations to our AGM as they see fit.