PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

B. B. WATTS

Our society has progressed a long way since its first conference 29 years ago. The way in which our conference is organised and run is the subject of considerable praise from many organizations, and is, I believe, a tribute to those office bearers in our Society who have developed the procedures we follow.

Today our society is held in high repute, both in New Zealand and overseas. But as with all organizations, we must keep a close watch on our activities to make sure we do not become too complacent.

Are we becoming too much of a scientific forum for research workers and not catering enough for advisory staff, chemical applicators, and farmers? How can we regain the active support of these important groups?

I am not suggesting that we should lower our standards for scientific papers in any way. It is of course essential that research work be presented and discussed — this must be. But it is, I believe, a fact of life that often these results are of very little immediate practical interest to the adviser or the end user who may want to know what to use to control his particular problem.

I see the great value of local branches in helping to bridge the gap between research workers and advisers and I personally am very pleased that the society has two very active branches — one in Palmerston North and one in Hastings. Here people can discuss local problems and often see in a demonstrable way the results of new techniques and materials used for weed and pest control. Local branch activity must be encouraged and expanded as an essential part of our society's activities. I know this means a lot of work for usually a few people but the more persons involved the less there is for any one individual to do. By having active local branches the society can regain the participation of advisory staff, contractors, and farmers.

Your present executive has recognised the importance of local branches. It has been decided that it is no longer a requirement that any money raised by the local branch, including the initial establishment grant, be remitted to the society. It is expected that local branches will continue to present reports of their activities to the annual general meeting, together with a balance sheet, but financially a branch will be self supporting after the initial establishment grant. Constitutions for local branches are to be drawn up, for consideration. It is the intention that all society members will be informed of local branch field days and meetings, but sometimes it may not be possible to do this.

The other question I wish to raise, and this will be discussed later at our annual general meeting, is how widely do you want the society to spread its activities? Do you wish to cover the whole field of weed and pest control or do you wish to deal more in depth with the more important problems? The current objectives of the society "shall be to pool and exchange information concerning weeds and pests and their control". This is a wide objective. Is it too wide? The incoming Executive would appreciate some guidance from the members on this subject.