The recognition of soil physics as a separate and distinct course in our agricultural colleges dates back only a comparatively few years. Previous to this time all of the instruction in soil physics was included in the lecture courses on general agricultural topics. The lecture system which prevailed during the early life of our colleges was the pouring out of information upon the student with the idea that he would be able to absorb a little of it, and that he would carry away with him a large amount of inspiration and enthusiasm for things agricultural.

I do not wish to criticize or to minimize in any way the splendid work of these pioneers in agricultural education, for it must be remembered that they were treading in unknown paths and blazing a new trail in educational matters.

There were two factors which determined the character of the work at this time: (1) the necessity for popularizing the work and securing support, and (2) the lack of scientific data upon which to base the instruction.

The collection and publication of scientific data by our experiment stations and by independent investigators has given us the material upon which to base improved methods of class-room instruction and a foundation upon which to build laboratory instruction and practice.

With this development of methods has come the tendency to differentiate more and more and to establish separate and more or less distinct lines of instruction for each of the various branches of the agricultural work, so that at the present time the majority of our colleges and universities no longer have a department of agriculture, but separate departments for the teaching of the various subjects.

This division and differentiation has made it possible to place the work upon a more pedagogical basis and to make "a careful selection and a systematic arrangement of the topics to be taught in a given course." The choice of topics for instruction and the arrangement of laboratory exercises is a very important matter, for it is obvious that only a very small amount of data can be profitably brought before our students in the limited time assigned to the work, even in our four-year courses in agriculture. This choice of material becomes a more difficult matter from year to year, with the increase in the fund of scientific knowledge.