TAKING AGRONOMIC RESEARCH TO THE FARMER

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The growth of agronomic science since the founding of the American Society of Agronomy in this city December 31, 1907, has been extremely rapid, and has been attended by an equally rapid growth of agronomic personnel. The title of agronomist was first applied to technical workers in this country in 1900, when three of the staff of the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois were so designated. Of course much had been done in the study of soils and crops prior to that date, but agronomy as agronomy has existed in the United States only during the past quarter of a century.

The first president of this Society, the late Mark Alfred Carleton, in his presidential address delivered at the Washington meeting in 1908, discussed "The Development and Proper Status of Agronomy." He pointed out that the three agronomists on the station lists in 1900 had grown to 50 in 1905 and 99 in 1908, with 25 soil specialists and 11 agricultural chemists also recorded in the latter year, a total of 135 agronomic workers listed as such. Carleton estimated that at that time there were at least 100 agronomists in the Department of Agriculture, or 235 in the colleges and stations and in the Department together. These were all teaching and research agronomists, possibly making occasional contacts with the farmers through farmers' institutes and the like. The day of the extension agronomist had not yet dawned. It was not far off, however, for extension work as we now know it was already being organized and county agricultural agents were beginning to be employed both North and South.

The further growth of agronomic teaching and research is indicated by the organization lists of college and station workers and of tech-