At this time, when the so-called evils of overproduction are being discussed, it seems appropriate to inquire into the responsibilities of agronomists. Agronomists are frequently given the credit of having been too successful in increasing production through the introduction and development of new varieties of crops and the improvement of some of the older varieties and through better soil management practices that are the result of soil research. It has been said rather frequently, during the last three or four years, that the agronomists have taken their task of making two blades of grass grow where one grew before too seriously, and actually made three and even four blades grow where one grew before. It has also been said that too many men have been trained for scientific work in agronomy. Again the statement is sometimes made that the country will soon have a planned or regimented agriculture, and there will then be no place for the men engaged in research in crop production, plant breeding, soil chemistry, soil biology, soil management, and other technical branches of agronomy. Strange as it may seem some of these accusations have come from men who are engaged in agronomic work. However, the majority of the men who are devoting their efforts to research in soils and crops are more far sighted and have more vision and believe that developments of the last few years have increased their opportunities for service and their responsibilities to society. We should, however, ask ourselves if we have been too zealous, if we have been too ardent in our devotion to our chosen field of endeavor, and if we have encouraged too many men to prepare themselves for scientific work in this field.

At a time like the present, it is obvious that it is wise to look forward as well as backward, and that in looking backward the clouds of the last four years must not be permitted to dim the vision. Since this Society was organized, great advances have been made in training men for teaching and research in agronomy. As a result of this training, the science has advanced rapidly and has had a tremendous influence on the economic and social life of the nation. That it will continue to have an equal or greater influence cannot be doubted.

1Presidential address delivered before the twenty-seventh annual meeting of the Society held in Washington, D. C., November 22, 1934.
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