HERE has been considerable discussion of the advisability of holding our annual meeting this year. Some saw the physical difficulties involved and favored cancellation. The majority, perplexed by the numerous new problems confronting them as a result of the war, felt even more keenly than normally the need to talk over their problems with their colleagues in other institutions. All felt that to justify a meeting at this time especial emphasis should be placed upon problems connected with the war. Such problems have been the dominant theme of our program.

Tonight, I shall exercise my prerogative as your President to speak to you about the job that lies ahead of us as agronomists in the post-war world. My remarks are based on the premise that the war will end eventually in a victory for the United Nations. I would not care to think about any other type of post-war world.

I think I can justify speaking about post-war problems in the midst of the war. This is a war of ideals. We need a clear conception of what we are fighting for, if we are to put our best efforts into the war. We need to express our objectives clearly so that the rest of the world can know what they are and can support us if they believe as we do. The problems of the post-war period will be just as difficult, possibly even more difficult, than those of the war. Internal dissention tends to disappear during a war. It will tend to rise again after the tension of war eases and we begin to consider the superficially less urgent problems of peace. The necessity of war was obvious after Pearl Harbor. The maladjustments of peace may fester for a generation before erupting. We won the last war but lost the peace. We must make this victory complete!

If the victory is to be complete and the peace a lasting peace, it is none too early for all of us to be thinking about it. It is well to have special post-war planning boards to work out details, but in our democracy, the final word is with the people. Our leaders will be helpless unless they have a clear mandate from the people. And finally, if these are not sufficient reasons for speaking about post-war problems, then what are the reasons? We have been taught that the power of the people is the only power that is safe to be trusted. I believe that the war will be won, but whether it will be followed by a lasting peace is a different matter.

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1Presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the Society in St. Louis, Mo., November 12, 1942.
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