TONIGHT we are assembled in the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy. During the past 36 years American agriculture has gone through most of the trials and troubles that could confront a great democracy. We weathered a world war, enjoyed one of the greatest boom periods in history and suffered through a depression coupled with a terrific 10-year drouth that rocked the nation. Some scars remain but many lessons were learned.

Today we are again involved in a world war. Its requirements for food, man-power, and expenditures of public money make the last world struggle appear small. Through war and peace the American agronomist has played an important role and has tried to live up to the standards and ideals laid down in 1907 by the founders of the American Society of Agronomy.

Carleton (1) in his presidential address in 1908 said of this organization, “The first association of the kind in America, and one that will have, without question, a tremendous influence on agricultural investigation and practice.” Thorne (6) remarked in 1915, that, “The ultimate purpose of the work of the scientific agronomist is to increase the production of food and clothing for humanity.” Jardine (2) wrote, “Men must be fed and clothed before they can fight. A continuous stream of food stuffs must be kept moving from this country and Canada to our allies and the allied armies at a time when not only is the world’s available food supply low but the stores of wheat in Russia, India, and Argentina are inaccessible. Especially heavy, therefore, is the responsibility resting upon American Agriculture.” This last quotation written in 1917 sounds so familiar that it could have been written in 1943.

There have been times during the past 36 years when the agronomist was accused of contributing too liberally to the food supply of the nation and agronomists, like many other scientists, were not in great demand. Today the world is again clamoring for more food,