A Half-Century of Crop Production Research

H. D. Hughes

FIRST, with regard to this "youngster" who has just preceded me at this podium. "Youngster"—I believe that is always the proper term to apply to one who is younger, is it not?

For you see I was a great big growing boy of 2 years and 2 months when he was a mere, new-born child—chubby, red-faced and with very little hair, but much loved because of his constant smile and general good cheer. And he really has not changed too much in these intervening years, has he?

I am referring, of course, only to his general features. Otherwise, how the picture has changed; then a sometimes crying and sometimes smiling, but a much cuddled, helpless baby; now a self-reliant, magnetic leader constantly doing much for so many. Certainly no one could have better represented the contributions that crop breeders have made to the world. The warm, instantaneous spontaneity of your response to his presentation is ample evidence of the appreciation of all for his leadership through these many years. His influence on so many of our present-day leaders in crop breeding cannot be measured. I personally am very grateful to him for just one such. With all due appreciation to our Dr. I. J. Johnson's native ability, I am sure that Dr. Hayes contributed greatly to its growth.

I recall a trip to St. Paul not long after Dr. Hayes had come out from the East, and recall an evening in the Hayes home, where many graduate students and some of the younger staff members were enjoying the friendly relationships and warm hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Hayes. I have always recalled that evening, Dr. Hayes, with much pleasure myself.

It would be expected, I believe, that one assigned a subject such as concerns us just now would wish to review somewhat the volumes of the Agronomy Journal from volume I for the years 1907 and 1908 down through the years that followed. Nowhere else, certainly, can one get so clear and complete a picture of the crops research through this 50-year period. That is exactly what I did; and I don't know when I have had a more delightfully profitable experience. A need, for which I am grateful, drove me to it. I recommend it to you as particularly good reading, both inspirational and informative. Don't wait until a need drives you to it.

Now with regard to some of those things I found of interest and which I think may interest you: To nearly all of you Mark A. Carlton is only a name. To a few of us the memory of him remains as that of an outstanding personality; one who contributed much to agronomy in its beginning and to the American Society of Agronomy.

It was going to be necessary for the individual, instead of attempting to achieve it, to overlook some of the factors concerning in an adequate general training."  

Dr. Charles B. Lipman said at about that same time—in 1912—"One of the commonplacest of today's generation, that this is distinctly an age of specialization, while there is no denying the advantages accruing to human society from such extensive labor, it appears to me that we have been attempting to achieve it, to overlook some concerns in an adequate general training."

Dr. H. J. Wheeler said in his presidential address to the American Society in 1910, "Today the young graduate upon the completion of the 4-year course can readily command an initial salary of $800 to $1200 and may be advanced within 2 or 3 more years to a position of greater responsibility and higher salary. But I would not want to fail to impress upon young men entering our profession that they should do so with the missionary spirit and with the desire to serve their country in agricultural science."