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OUR HERITAGE OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

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PREFACE

A year ago, our theme for the meetings of our three associated societies dealt with the problem of providing food for the world's population of 1980 and beyond. This theme was timely and was so recognized by a special citation presented to the ASA at the annual meeting of the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation in Washington, D. C.

Gratified though we are by this recognition, it is incumbent on us, as a society, to be fully cognizant of the implications of the monumental task of providing food for the hungry multitudes of the future with respect to our resource heritage.

In his recent book, The Quiet Crisis, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall has posed some pertinent questions. "Is society a success," he asks, "if it creates conditions that... make a wasteland of its finest landscapes? What does material abundance avail if we create an environment in which man's highest and most specifically human attributes cannot be fulfilled?"

The theme of our meetings this year, "Our Heritage of Land and Water Resources," dedicates itself to the proposition that though we stand poised on a pinnacle of material abundance, we must not overlook the spectre of a land of vanishing beauty, of shrinking open space, and of diminishing resources under daily attack by pollution and ill-conceived exploitation. Though the crisis may be quiet, it is nevertheless urgent, and it is important that we address ourselves to a transition from a heritage in which man once was confronted by the ravages of nature to a future in which nature is subject to confrontation by the ravages of man.

Expansion of civilization is inexorably linked to development and use of resources. It is fitting that we here today attempt a realistic assessment of those resources, the factors and processes that determine how these resources will be used, the steps that can be taken to assure continuing

availability in quality and quantity, and finally, the opportunities that our resources provide for enhancing the quality of our daily existence, if they are developed, used, and properly protected.

The four speakers, who have so graciously consented to sharing their experiences, thinking, and capacity for leadership with use, have been thoughtfully selected after consultation with many of your colleagues. Each brings to this meeting a distinguished background of competence, service, and dedication for the specific contribution that we have asked him to make to our program.

Lincoln, Nebraska
June 1966

Herbert H. Kramer, President
American Society of Agronomy

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