The problems arising in the settlement of the unused lands may not seem of any great importance at the present time when improved farms are being abandoned and when there is little movement anywhere towards lands of doubtful value. Economists, however, agree that the agricultural depression now prevailing is only temporary. One need not possess prophetic vision to predict that within a very few years, the tide of population now flowing towards the cities will turn and there will be another rush of settlers over the marginal lands. This next invasion of settlers will probably stand in more need of assistance in selecting land and be more willing to receive such assistance than any which has preceded, for it will be composed not so largely of experienced farmers moving a short distance on to good land but of men of all sorts, many of them from the cities to take up land in sections where they know little of the soils and agricultural conditions. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that a greater number of these will require assistance in selecting their land and that the soil survey and other branches of the agricultural departments will be called on for advice.

The soil surveys, state and national, have accumulated a vast amount of information concerning a large part of the unused land, which should be of value to the prospective settler if properly presented. That such information has been of value in the past can be proved by a great number of known cases. Whatever doubt may be held as to the ability of the established farmer to make direct use of the soil survey map and report, there can be no question that prospective settlers have in a great number of cases made immediate, practical use of this information. Many settlers have been prevented from taking up worthless land, others have been guided in selecting the best type of soil in a given tract, and farmers and fruit growers, have by means of the soil survey found the soil and the location suited to their needs. With our increasing knowledge of soils even more help of this kind should be furnished in the future. In many cases the soil map and report can supply the prospective settler with the information that he needs; in other cases, these publications must be interpreted and made more available for his use, and often they must be supplemented by the reports of the agronomist and the economist. In all cases, however, the soil survey report is the foundation upon which any valuation should be built.

The criticism is sometimes made that the soil survey report does not place sufficient emphasis on the deficiencies of soils of low value that are sold to the unsuspecting public. While this may seem to be true in some cases, it does not indicate a lack of courage on the part