PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

D. D. McPHAIL

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of societies involved in work concerned with crop production and the extent of collaboration between them.

This is shown in practice by the holding of comprehensive conferences under the overall sponsorship of the N.Z.I.A.S. at which the individual societies present their individual programmes at the same venue concurrently thereby allowing those attending to participate in sessions of interest arranged by any of the contributing societies.

There has been some discussion in our own Society's committee as to whether we should participate in such a conference or maintain our independence. So far the latter course has been followed but this policy will require periodic re-examination to ensure that we always act in the best interests of our members.

I believe that discussion of this matter must involve consideration of the scope of our own conference. From an initial concern with weeds alone we have extended into insect pest control, fungous disease control and, theoretically at least, into consideration of any factors other than fertilisers which affect crop production.

I feel that the more extensive our interests become the more seriously we should consider collaborating with other societies. If our scope increases we tend to be parallel to, and possibly competing with other organisations and co-operation is more constructive. The time we have for our conference is limited by practical considerations to three days. If this is divided between four or five main subjects attendance may be affected as members' interest in the total programme is diluted. It could therefore be desirable to have other sessions available to us and to attract members of other societies to ours.

Any further extension of activity would be of greatest interest to those concerned with the whole range of agronomic factors for research or advisory reasons. For those whose concern is limited to one or two factors other activities are somewhat academic.

There are many other factors involved in such a discussion from the range of interests of our members to the extent to which these are met by other societies to the problems and advantages of large, composite conferences.

Essentially I wish to bring to your attention the thought that we must from time to time check that we are discharging the function which brings us together, in the best possible way.

I suggest that this question should be discussed at local branch level and any recommendations be passed to the incoming committee.