**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
to 35th Conference 1982
M.J. Esson**

That the Society is in good heart and fulfilling our objectives namely “to pool and exchange information concerning weeds and pests and their control” is undoubted. We have a record number of papers for this conference, so many in fact, that for the first time we have been forced into extending the conference into a fourth day. This is a move which may have caused some concern. However the choice the Executive was faced with was to either extend into a fourth day or to reject some 15 papers which was felt to be an unacceptable alternative.

The year is also a record one from the publications point of view. After many trials and tribulations the 3rd and expanded edition of Identification of Weeds and Clovers is at long last available. The 2nd Edition of Standard Common Names has now very largely been put onto “floppy disc” and when the last few remaining nomenclatural problems have been solved, it will be possible to print and distribute this very valuable publication. A hard working committee in Christchurch which includes two of our life members, Arthur Healy and Frank Allen, our Vice President Max Moore and Executive member Dr Ron Close have been responsible for advancing this publication and I wish to thank them for their dedication to a difficult task. Three other publications must also be mentioned. The first is the colour booklet for the identification of weeds which Alan Upritchard has done so much work for. It is now well advanced with nearly all of the colour photography completed. The second is the separate proceedings of the stripe rust symposium presented at this conference. I am sure it will have a wide dissemination and prove to be of great value. It illustrates one of the best features of this society which is the ability to collect information and publish, rapidly, material of national importance and topical interest. I compliment all those involved, particularly the authors, and Ron Close who organised the symposium.

The third publication was produced by one of our branches. The Proceedings of a Pesticide Resistance Seminar held in Hastings in May is due to appear in the very near future. This is a topic of importance to us all and I congratulate Hawkes Bay and in particular Andre’ Geelen for organising it. I pay a special tribute and owe a debt of thanks to the members of this Society for the way they supported the seminar and the generosity of many firms, who not only support our society by their sustaining memberships but also contributed towards the cost of publishing these proceedings. The Society is indeed very fortunate in having the support of these companies. We have undoubtedly become the leading forum in New Zealand for the dissemination of applied research findings and our Proceedings recognised as a worthy and a scientifically meritorious journal.

There are, however, some areas of concern to me; the number of papers being presented to the Society by industry and the fact that the membership is relatively static.

There has this year been a small improvement in the number of papers from industry with 19% against 10% last year, but this still represents only half the number of some years ago. I believe the causes to be threefold. Firstly the scientific standing and technical editing of the Proceedings have risen over the years and many company research personnel have found that the time required to achieve the necessary standard has increased to the point that the effort is no longer worthwhile. Secondly, the number of new products coming forward are now much fewer and, lastly, in today’s intensely competitive commercial situation early publication of work could be disadvantageous.

The second point refers to membership. We have an increasingly obvious gap in our membership — the end users of agricultural chemicals, the spray contractors, growers and producers and, to some extent, the advisors both government employed and from the mercantile firms. Many I have spoken to, who were in the past members, now find our conference too technical and no longer directly applicable. It was to get these people involved that our branches were established, but with one notable exception this has not been achieved.

Perhaps we should give serious consideration to more research note type papers and poster sessions to encourage both membership and industry involvement. As one move in the direction of making the papers more meaningful to a larger audience, I ask you to give support to a motion which will be moved a little later. It aims to relax a little one of our previously most sacrosanct conventions and allow the use of trade names once in a paper.

Two other areas also concern me. The first is a rather touchy subject. Last year a certain amount of ill feeling arose from the fact that some members felt that well established and well known products had been presented in an unfair way in our proceedings. Some of these complaints I felt had some justification, and I implore all members to remember that this Society is an excellent forum to freely discuss and exchange information between all companies and government funded research organisations, and not to 'score points', no matter how unintentional that may be. No single factor can more quickly and effectively cause our Society to lose ground and support than these sorts of conflicts. Whilst recognising the total independence of all authors, I ask everyone to consider referring unexpected adverse findings on established products to the proprietors of that product for comment, prior to publication. Technical editing can only pick up obvious faults in data presented or faulty trial design.

The second area is not nearly so contentious. There is a great need by many of us to gain a much fuller understanding of the whole field of crop protection and how each discipline impinges on the others. For this reason I strongly support topic orientated sessions where the "whole crop approach" is used rather than our more usual discipline orientated sessions. Most company researchers are involved in much wider areas of crop protection than those employed by Government, and for this reason very often have a better understanding of the subject. Perhaps getting away from weeds and pests in our title and using the name N.Z. Crop, or Plant Protection Society is worthy of serious consideration.

I want to thank the Executive committee for their work and support during the year and in particular Jennifer Hartley who not only has to put up with me but also carries the bulk of the work of the Society practically single handed. She receives most of the criticism when it arises and gets little of the richly deserved praise she earns for her efforts on our behalf.

To close, I would like to pay a small tribute to Dan Watkins. He was a man of great foresight and he played a key role in many areas of the Agricultural Chemical Industry. It was very largely from his initiative and drive that our Society was formed and has reached the position it holds today. His inspiration and dedication will be sorely missed by all.

Thank you