Message to the Members

DAN FULTON
President, American Society of Range Management

I HAVE been reading a History of the American Society of Range Management, 1946 to 1949, prepared during 1950 by the Historical Committee of the Society. It gives me the greatest possible gratification to be connected with an organization that has made so much progress from such humble beginnings in such a short time.

At the Billings meeting, one of the highlights was the report of our able Secretary, Pat McIlvain, indicating our situation at that time. He portrayed an analogy between our Society and a steer, both three year olds, boogery, snorty and full of spirit. Then he commented, “His hide is still loose, and there is room for lots more beef.”

In a way, our Society is also somewhat comparable to a boy in his early “teens”. We are at the “awkward” age. We are almost too big to continue to operate without a paid secretary, and not quite big enough to adequately finance a paid executive secretary and an office such as he would require to fill the duties we would expect from him.

Your Directors in session at Billings considered several angles of this financial problem. The opinion was that an increase in annual dues per member should be delayed just as long as it is possible to do so. There was fear that such an increase in dues might restrict our membership, and the members that we might lose by such a course would be just that portion of our membership which is of greatest value and assistance to us to achieve our objectives. Another angle that was discussed at some length was the possibility of making the Journal at least partly self-supporting by advertising. Steps are being taken to more fully explore this possibility, and we have much hope that we will be able to do something along this line.

The thing that will best “fill out our hide”, help along our finances and help us generally along the road to our objective, “To foster Advancement in the Science and Art of Range Management” is more members, and I think we can get them.

I think we can get them because we have something to sell. First, of course, we have an excellent Journal, which, by any standard of values, is worth the full cost of membership. What is probably equally important is the fact that we have developed a character and a standing in our field that is good. We offer the only organized meeting ground for several groups that have need of such a meeting ground. Some of these groups are the rancher, the ultra-technical researcher and the “practical” technical man working at the ground level, either as a public land administrator, or as a technical assistant to farmers or ranchers. It is rather obvious that no one of these groups is going to perform much function in a vacuum apart from the others.
Another thing that makes me tremendously interested in and proud to belong to our Society I have trouble expressing. The largest part of our membership, and much (not all) of our interest, is in an area of low precipitation. A large part of our interest is in natural vegetation. Perhaps we are "Western", not in a narrow, provincial sense, but in a broad world-wide sense, trying to see and understand a particular sort of environment, not from the standpoint of a different environment, but from the standpoint of that environment in which we live. How any "Westerner", either technician or rancher, can fail to get a thrill out of belonging to and supporting this organization, I just cannot understand.

Many of the young men working at the ground level, which I mentioned above, are going into the Armed Services. Many are in the Reserves, many will be drafted. In a sense, this is their organization because they operate at the focal point of much of our work. The least we can do is to keep their organization strong and active while they are away. I have great personal hope that many ranchers will help to do so.

Your officers are now organizing this membership drive with a Society Membership Chairman and Section Membership Chairmen to spearhead the effort. Perhaps by the time you read this, the organization will have been set up. But it takes individual effort to get a new member and every present member can work at it. It is only by this individual effort by our present members that we can succeed.

During 1950, one individual member of our Society personally enrolled 64 new members. If he enrolled 64, aren't you a good enough man to enroll one or two or three during 1951? If every member will get one new member during 1951, our problems of the moment will be solved, and we will be ready to get along to the important ones. It is up to you.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee calls for nominations for 1952. To be elected are President, Vice-president, and two members of the Board of Directors. Petitions must be signed by at least ten members of the Society in good standing. Consult Articles II and III of the Bylaws for eligibility, conditions and procedures (See March 1951 Journal, 4:131-132).

Petitions should be accompanied by a letter from the petitioners stating that their nominee or nominees will accept the office if elected, and a brief biographical sketch of each person nominated. So that the list of nominees can be completed in time for the ballot to be sent by the Secretary to the members before October 1, it is essential that petitions be in the hands of the nominating committee by August 1.

Joseph F. Peckance
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