An Obligation

IN THESE troublesome times in which we find ourselves currently engrossed, there are many problems confronting both the practical range livestock raiser and the professional man. As a country we are recuperating after a war which taxed our agricultural, industrial, economic and moral strength to the limit. We see, as we look ahead to the new horizons of the future that perhaps our period of recuperation has been too short, for the outlook for ourselves and our immediate posterity is indeed dark. We find that we are needing to prepare for another conflict which could last over a period of several decades. This is true because our nation is in opposition to a system of statism that has industrial and agricultural resources comparable to our own, and an almost limitless supply of manpower. The Soviet Union also has a doctrine that is directly opposed to all that which we as a nation hold dear, and they will spend all their resources and manpower to promulgate that doctrine over all the world.

The struggle between communism and democracy proposes to be an exceedingly long and hard one, with the final victor being the one with the most moral integrity, physical resources, and fortitude to outlast the other. These vital world-wide facts pose complex problems to those who are interested in the management and conservation of our range lands. There is a pressing need for rapidly producing foods, especially meat produced on our ranges. This supply is not needed for our own consumption alone, but also for those countries which are on the brink of starvation and are being led astray by the luring promises of communism.

We are also faced with a dire shortage of wool due to a lack of stockpiling and increased demand. We have been told that we must raise more wool, and since most of the wool is produced on the western range lands it will become the burden of these ranges. This is where the range man must remember the bitter lessons of the past and realize that our struggle with communism probably will not be an overnight affair and that our grasslands must produce enough, not only for our present emergency, but must come out of it in condition to produce at least until the dangers of world aggression are removed.

It is the responsibility of those who know the potentialities of our ranges and the ease of their destruction to use that knowledge in the conservation of these lands. A lack of basic knowledge concern-
ing those things from which they gained
their livelihood has always plagued our
ranchers. In this crisis, however, is
another lure which will ensnare some of
those who feel that they must “make
hay while the sun shines” by taking all
that is in our ranges because of the
prevailing high prices. It will be the
rancher who knows the value of, and
practices proper range management who
will do the most good. The better con-
ditioned cattle he owns, the higher per-
centage of calf crops, the heavier weaning
calves and lambs, and the greater amount
of wool produced per head will not go
unnoticed by his neighbors, nor will the
means by which he obtained them. The
men who NEED to know the value of
proper range management are the ones
who would not be fazed by hours of talk-
ing and explaining but will readily see its
value in terms of their neighbors heavier
calves and fleeces, or larger calf crops.
These men are our ranchers, both large
and small, into whose hands are entrusted
the management of the production of our
range products, and it will depend upon
what they DO, not what they could have
done or should have done, that will de-
termine whether or not we can continue
to produce throughout a long struggle
with communism.

Thus, we have an obligation. We have
an obligation as ranchers to put into
practice only the best range management
practices. We have an obligation as pro-
fessional men to search out, prove, and
disseminate the best of practices, and
we have an obligation as students to
prepare ourselves to fill the shoes of these
men. Robert Carter, Student, Abilene
Christian College, Abilene, Texas.

Our Range Management Schools

In SOME of our schools, range manage-
ment is taught as a separate major
in range management departments which
are independent from other fields. In
other schools the range teaching is in
departments of Forestry, Animal Hus-
bandry, Botany or Agronomy. In each
of these separate cases, the range material
taught has a distinct flavor of the subject
matter department in which the courses
are given. Thus, in the department of
Animal Husbandry, no forestry and often
too little of the material in plant sciences
is required. This may be very well and
what one would expect but it does seem
that if students are properly trained in
range management they should have a
well-balanced curriculum of all these
subjects. Many of our universities and
colleges do not grant a degree in range
management but a great many do have
one or two courses in range that are
service courses to students majoring in
other fields.

In brief, range management is taught
from the standpoint of a separate science
in some schools, to a bare mention of the
subject matter in others. Here is a good
field of effort for the Society and I sug-
gest that it take action to promote addi-
tional training in range management
particularly in the western schools.

The many variations mentioned above
lead to the suggestion that some sort of
standard should be established for the
training of technicians in range manage-
ment. The Curricula Committee made a
good start in 1950 (See Journal 4:212
1951), and the effort is being continued
in 1951 through the combined Civil
Service Eligibility-Curricula Committee.
I believe that every school that offers a
major in range management should have
a minimum number of required credits,
on the semester equivalent basis, in the
field of range management and in the
several closely allied subject matter fields.
I am not proposing an accrediting system