Editorial
Towards a Better Understanding of Our Problem

During the 19th century, particularly the second half, France was seriously preoccupied with flood and soil erosion control. The unwise and irrational use of land resources of the upland country, matched with the particularly unstable geologic formations and steep slopes of the Alps, had resulted in an over-accelerated erosion of the soil, with all the consequences of catastrophic floods upon urban and industrial centers and highly productive land in the plains as well. Soon, as a result, uneven production of water also became an item of high consideration.

Thorough studies by most qualified specialists of that time (hydraulic and forest engineers) were not slow to demonstrate the beneficial effect of the forest cover, which was, it must be emphasized, gravely damaged. Forest Protection and Reforestation in the catchings of the active torrents became the green flag of a vigorous public forest service which in the early 1860's started with patriotic enthusiasm the rehabilitation of the depleted mountains of their home country. Twenty years later, because of the vigorous and continuously growing resistance of the mountain population, whose livelihood and economy were based mainly on livestock, and because of the mean-time gained experience in the field, a quite striking change resulted; their initial flag had been replaced now by a more realistic one, which read: Rehabilitation of the mountains by Reforestation and Range Revegetation.

In Humboldt County, California, USA, a controversy exists on whether to convert the Douglas fir tree farms to grasslands or not—and, it must be emphasized, this country experienced a real fever of total conversion to pastures, regardless, usually, of soil and general physical conditions—nourished by the general belief that livestock operation could provide higher income and quicker returns. Costly experiences of such unsuccessful conversions, followed by appropriate and detailed economic studies made in time, pointed out the error of general conversion and prevented future disappointment. The timber industry is very important, and the people of Humboldt County depend on it. It is the main source for direct (mills etc.) and indirect (retail stores, financial institutions, service industries, etc.) jobs. A good soil and general survey of the area will provide the basis for a proper land management plan and avoid mistakes originating from a professionally narrow look at the general land management problem, and so secure the welfare of the country.

In South Europe, the Far East and the Near East, all countries of old civilization, whose land has been over-and misused for many centuries, unsatisfactory economic conditions have prevailed, and productivity especially of the uplands has been greatly lowered. The demand for supporting the existing and accelerating population is of paramount importance and very urgent. An integrated effort is needed to rehabilitate the depleted wildlands and reach the potential in productivity of these lands as soon as possible. The upland and lowland agrarians as well as the urban population ask for more meat, more milk, better clothing, better homes, more water of good quality with regular distribution, opportunities for recreation, and increase of job...
opportunities throughout the year. All these services must be procured from the same land which has to be rehabilitated and developed. We all know about the multiple use concept; we have heard so much about it in recent years. This is the task and challenge of the wildland manager especially in those countries in the process of rehabilitation through large investments. Another problem is closely related to the question of multiple use of the uplands: that of classifying, for the purpose of rehabilitation and development, the land among the three main categories of use, namely: Grasslands, Timberlands, and Arable lands, in extent as well as in space. There must be an ideal and harmonious combination of land-use categories, which best respond to particular physical, demographic, and economic conditions of a discrete area. This is what in Europe is called Agro-sylvo-pastoral Equilibrium in land use. It is evident that this equilibrium in land use, being also of a dynamic nature, is different from the multiple use concept and must not be confused with it.

From this very brief review of the problem with which we are faced, we can readily comprehend the complexity of the situation. A picture of that complexity could be gained if we looked for a moment at the problem of range management alone with the introduction of some of the new ideas of range influences, ecosystem analysis, energy balance, overcoming of nature’s limitations, and others, introduced because of the advancement in sciences and bringing us closer to the truth.

The task, therefore, of the range manager is not simple and his job not an easy one. He acts in a sector which is an organic part of a higher level system, and within which his actions are in very close connection and interrelationship with the other sectors of the same system.

It is obvious that for a harmonious functioning of his activities, he must be able to see the contributions and value of the activities of the other contributors of the system. And only being able to see such contribution he can drive, by coordinating his actions, toward the highest possible revenue for our society out of his land. Knowledge, also, of the needs of the people he deals with is very important. Moreover, acting within the general framework of land economy, the nature of which is dynamic and subject to changes, he must keep abreast with all progress in sciences and changes in needs and services of our people; the fulfillment of these needs and services is the goal of his activity and only when he reaches it that activity of his is good. It is opportune on that point to quote from Aristotle’s book “Nicomachean Ethics” the following: . . . “If therefore among the ends at which our actions aim there be one which we will for its own sake, while we will the others only for the sake of this, and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else, it is clear that this one ultimate End must be the Good and indeed the Supreme Good. Will not then a knowledge of this Supreme Good be also of great practical importance for the conduct of life? Will it not better enable us to attain our proper object, like archers having a target to aim at? If this be so, we ought to make an attempt to comprehend at all events in outline what exactly this Supreme Good is, and of which of the sciences or faculties it is the object.”

We have seen in the preceding paragraphs that the conflicts were the result of ignorance. The broadening, therefore, of our views is the safety valve in our course. If this be so, what is the cause of all our trouble? We all know that the tremendous advancement in sciences and accumulation of scientific knowledge has created the need for specializations, the only way to face properly and with clarity our problems. This scientific specialization led to the specialized professional society needed probably to stimulate further progress. Thus the opportunities for contacts and exchange of ideas become more and more rare and only occasional. In the editorial page of the January 1961 issue of the Journal of Range Management Dr. H. Heady said, talking about his impressions from the 8th International Grassland Congress in Reading, England: “Range Management as we know it in the U. S. was nearly ignored (I have been told it was more prominent in the recent World Forestry Congress at Seattle). Emphasis was on the many aspects of what is commonly called pasture.”

I think our society is very narrow and cannot give the possibilities for examining the range management problems within the natural framework of land management, particularly in the upland country, the management of which so much affects the general economy of each nation. Land management is not a basic, a theoretical science; it is an applied science, it is an art but based on scientific principles. If for a theoretical science, aiming to find out the truth of natural phenomena regardless of any useful applica-
tion, a professional isolation cannot be particularly harmful, it is not so for an applied science, a business art as range management is. And since we practice economy, we drive the same direction with other groups, among which a number have neighboring starting points with us. They are the relatives of ours, preoccupied with the management of land and water resources.

Dr. A. M. Schultz in his paper given in the annual meeting of the California Section of our Society in Fresno, November 3-4, 1960, said: “In years to come, the issue of range management as perhaps the issue of civil rights will pass out of the picture. The larger issue, land management, will be the focusing point for agronomists and ecologists when the color line between cropland, rangeland, watershed, forest, and funland fades into proper perspective.”

An example of such a broadening of views and similar professional organization is the “Federation Francaise d’Economie Abreste” of which I have the honor to be a founder member. The organization, having as its central idea the pastoral economy of the country, is composed of specialists and professionals of different disciplines, which have some connection directly or indirectly with the upland economy. Specialists and professionals in Range Management, Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Ecology, Veterinary Medicine, Watershed Management, Agronomy, Geography, Economics, and others discuss the range management problem from every standpoint with a dynamic approach and so enlighten the subject in the mind of those particularly interested and those in charge of range management specialists.

Such an organization will be partially efficient only if limited within the boundaries of solely one nation. Different countries present a big variety of problems with historical sources, offering thus, we might say, a time sequence in the evolution of the general problem of the land economy with all its implications upon the other sectors of the general economy. Such problems in all their polymorphism and with all their advantages can only be discussed and clarified in an international organization.

The need for a world-wide coordinated organization is more urgent than ever. We must take a step toward such a society in order to solve our problems in the most perfect way, before we move, maybe, to the other stars of the universe.

Might it be possible to see such an organization to be the host of the next International Congress in Brazil? — Dr. Leonidas G. Liacos, in charge of Range and Watershed Management Studies, Service of Forest Technical Works (Y.D.E.M.), Forest Service, Thessaloniki, Greece.

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Editorial

Range Research—A Must in Modern Management

Today’s open range and large fenced areas of native range lands are laboratories for range research. Since Will C. Barnes, one of Arizona’s great pioneers in the field of range management and a strong advocate for getting the facts associated with various systems of grazing on native Western grasslands published The Story of The Range in 1926, the picture has changed. He stated that the area of land used for grazing, excluding crop lands and part-of-the-year pastures, was about “one billion fifty-five million acres, or fifty-five per cent of the total area of this country.” Through the years following, great herds of livestock spread over much of the North American continent. As a result, once-productive grasses, forbs and browse, began to reduce in numbers until they supplied only a limited amount of desirable forage for livestock consumption.

The trampling of these herds and general abuse led into the period of great dust storms and soil erosion. Remarkable changes in native vegetation occurred. Overstocking, drouth, wind erosion combined to damage millions of once-productive acres of range land. The Rocky Mountain ranges suffered through mismanagement and poor weather conditions.

During this period Federal agencies took steps toward rehabilitation of the range areas. Men trained in range management were employed. Gradually Western colleges introduced courses in range management for undergraduates to obtain scientific background to further the rehabilitation work.

As the work progressed it became evident that more extensive scientific training was necessary to obtain quantitative results. Graduate training for the doctorate in range management was requested. The Range and Forestry Department of Texas A & M College was first to offer a curriculum in range management for the granting of a doc-