Still Growing and Developing in '76

B. J. RAGSDALE

It has indeed been an honor and privilege to have served the Society for Range Management as president in 1976, the year in which the United States celebrated its 200th birthday. As a professional society we have only been in existence since 1948, a relatively short time as compared to the United States' 200-year life span or the time Mexico, Canada, or other nations represented in the membership of our Society have been nations. During this brief time we have grown, matured, and made significant impact on the art and science of range management and rangelands of the world. Several significant accomplishments took place during 1976, but much remains to be done if we are to be the professional society to represent range people and reach that ultimate goal of seeing proper use and management imposed on the world's rangelands and range resources.

A goal of each president, whether of parent Society or Section, is to significantly increase the number of viable interested members. We did not make a great increase, as we had 5,561 members January 31, 1977, as compared to 5,504 on the same date in 1976. What may be significant is that renewals are coming in faster and at this time are some 5% ahead of last year.

Membership must be the concern of all elements of the Society. Each member must see that his membership is renewed and recruit new members. Membership committees must provide guidance and incentive to members; Sections and the parent Society must in turn provide desired membership services.

A GOAL OF MINE in the area of information, education, and communication was accomplished to some extent through the president's and secretary's messages in Rangeman's Journal. Through responses by the officers, directors, and individual members, we have communicated with many agricultural, governmental, and other groups. I feel we have not reached the general public.

A LONG-TERM GOAL reached in 1976 was the acquiring of our own building. The desire of our members as well as growth in number and workload of the Denver staff predicated this action. Many contributed to this venture—Dr. Robert Hyde and the Permanent Headquarters Building Committee; Mr. Robert Williamson and the Finance Committee; Mr. Milton Sechrist, who served as liaison between the two committees; and Mr. David Smith, executive secretary, who coordinated the transactions. To these we owe a debt of gratitude.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE is a relatively new one, only completing its second year of work, but one which has contributed greatly. They developed guidelines for financing which cleared the way for securing our building. The contribution policy proposed by them and later adopted by the Board, guidance in amending the Articles of Incorporation, the proposal for an Audit Committee, and guidance in budget and financial management make the contributions of this committee great in terms of our success and progress.

While on the subjects of the building and financing, I urge you to consider how you can contribute to the future of the Society for Range Management through donations, gifts, and purchase of the promissory notes. Your support and cooperation will assure the retiring of the note on the building and maintaining a sound financial program.

CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN for some time to the Society's becoming a member of CAST, Council of Agricultural Science and Technology. Membership costs have been included in the proposed budget and formal petition for membership is anticipated for 1977.

A study is being made of membership services, cost of new programs, both initiated and proposed, and current dues structure. With inflation, progress and services desired by members, it is inevitable that dues must be increased above the current level. Many other societies have already imposed such increases.

A STATEMENT IS CONTAINED in Benchmarks: A Statement of Concepts and Positions about internationalism. It is...
within this area that a major step was finalized in 1976 with the final organization of the International Rangeland Commission. The Commission is sponsored by the Society with membership currently limited to Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Membership will include Society members as well as representatives from the Departments of Agriculture of the three participating countries. A major goal of the Commission will be to address mutual problems of the participating countries, convey information of these problems to the governments of the participating countries, and secure additional interest and action from the governments in solving the problems. The first activity planned by the Commission will be to delineate mutual problems and develop a plan of action to work toward solving these problems. Dr. Martin Gonzalez of Mexico is chairman of the Commission, and Mr. E. A. McKinnon of Canada is vice-chairman.

PROGRESS IS CONTINUING on schedule for the First International Rangeland Congress scheduled for August, 1978. Dr. Harold Heady and the International Affairs Committee are to be commended for their efforts in planning and organizing and eventually bringing to fruition this event, which will provide for the exchange of knowledge of the world’s rangelands.

ANOTHER RELATIVELY NEW PROGRAM of the Society is the Old West Regional Range Program. The 2-year program is scheduled for completion in March, 1977, but all indications are that a second grant will be made by the Old West Regional Commission for continuing the program for 2 more years. Increased educational activities for both adults and youth; development of films, one of which was premiered at the plenary session of this annual meeting; and development of range inventory data and maps, indicate the success of this program. The overall value will be the continuance of activities within the five states of the Old West Region after our involvement is completed; all indications point to this.

An outgrowth of the Old West Program was the "Governor’s Conference on Montana Rangelands" hosted by Governor Thomas L. Judge of Montana. Hopefully, other governors will follow with similar programs.

The Society’s first venture with a grant has not been "all roses," but from this experience a set of guidelines was adopted by a January Board Meeting to govern our future actions concerning such activities.

THE BOARD DURING ITS JANUARY MEETING adopted a set of standards and a plan developed by the Professional Affairs Committee to upgrade Civil Service standards for range conservationists. Support has been secured from the Bureau of Land Management, Soil Conservation Service, and Forest Service. Hopefully, this will result in the Civil Service Commission revising their standards.

THE INITIATION OF THE FELLOW AWARD PROGRAM, to me, is a long overdue, worthwhile addition to our Honor Award Program. The responses received from those to be recognized at this meeting indicate the high value placed on this award. E. William “Bill” Anderson and the Honor Award Committee did a magnificent job in implementing this program to recognize those who have contributed so greatly to the Society for Range Management.

TWO OF THE ORIGINAL GOALS for the Society as outlined by Mr. Joseph F. Pechanec in his article in the first issue of the Journal of Range Management were for the publication of a Journal devoted to the subject of range and to provide for meetings to exchange ideas, new developments, and discussion of policies. Improvement of the Journal of Range Management through the years and the addition of Rangeman’s Journal indicate to me that we are continuing to meet this goal. Continual evaluation must be made for the improvement of these publications to meet the needs of our members as well as the many users outside our ranks.

IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE to attend several Section and other meetings during the year. It was gratifying to see current topics of concern discussed both pro and con by meeting participants. I sensed a feeling of increasing interest in range and solving range problems by both Society members and others; this feeling was experienced at the National Veterinary Congress in Mexico City, the Governor’s Conference in Montana, at the Section meetings, and at local field days.

In this brief report I have attempted to highlight some of the major events of 1976. All of our committees and liaison representatives have been active and working on their assignments. The Sections, Chapters, Advisory Council Board, Executive Secretary David Smith, the Denver staff, and above all, you the individual member, have demonstrated by your dedication and hard work that you want the Society for Range Management to continue to grow and meet our responsibilities. I challenge each of you to rededicate yourself to the tasks ahead.

Thank you again for the honor accorded me by allowing me to be your president in 1976.

**New Editor**

Dr. Rex D. Pieper will assume the responsibilities of editor of the Journal of Range Management following the resignation of Editor Elbert H. Reid for health reasons. Manuscripts and correspondence concerning them should be sent to Dr. Pieper, Dept. of Animal Sciences, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88001.