

INAUGURAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

IT IS the custom at the Annual Meeting for the incoming president to make a speech. However, I promise you that my speech is going to be a very short one.

Everyone must realize that the Society from its start has functioned in a mature manner as a coordinator and promoter of photogrammetric activities. Merely to list a few of the projects that have been successfully completed, such as Standard Specifications for Aerial Photographs, Precision Camera Specifications, Bibliography of Photogrammetry, Specifications for Map Accuracy, Nomenclature, and the Manual of Photogrammetry, is enough to convince one of this.

In other ways our young Society has been steadily engaged in growing up. The stage at which flesh and bones, muscles and sinews, are fully developed has nearly been reached. This is evidenced in the recent amendment to the constitution of the Society permitting what might be called a vertical classification of members on a basis of age, experience, and achievement. By introducing this desirable classification the Society takes its place among the select body of professional, scientific and technical societies.

There are, however, various ways of classifying membership "horizontally," let us say; for instance, within the membership are included technicians, research workers, teachers, and administrators.

One broad horizontal classification of another sort stands out conspicuously. In this there are three types: those in government employ, those in the commercial field, and, finally, a group of individuals whose activities and interests in photogrammetry are neither governmental nor commercial. These include research workers, teachers, and many people in other professions who have sufficient interest in photogrammetry to keep themselves informed on the subject.

Up to now no member of this third group has been appointed president. Two or three years ago, Professor Church was offered the appointment but regrettably was unable to accept for personal reasons. Consequently, I find myself with the honor of being the first president from this third group of members. As a group we may be described, for better or for worse, as a bunch of unrestrained individuals, so I hasten to add that any opinions that I may express from now on are purely my own personal ones. In fact resemblance to those of others is purely coincidental.

It is not always remembered that all the operations of mapping from photographs, after these have been processed, can be carried out with ordinary drafting equipment. The use of measuring and plotting instruments in photogrammetry is then for the sole purpose of increasing precision and efficiency. The traditional European approach has been to build universal instruments capable of handling all the various operations of making maps from photographs. These instruments require highly skilled and experienced operators. In sharp contrast has been the American approach, and American genius for mass production has been well exemplified in this matter of instrumentation in photogrammetry. The classic example, of course, is the Brock process, so successfully used at present by the Aero Service Corporation. In this system four kinds of instruments are used exclusive of computing devices. Moreover, in this country even in the employment of universal instruments, such as the multiplex and stereoplanigraph, the fundamental operations of control and detail plotting are kept separate.

The last few years have seen the development of various one-operation in-

struments which have helped in the avoidance of operational bottlenecks. No one supposes for a moment, however, that more and better instruments are not going to be produced, especially in connection with control operations, and I wonder whether the real secret of the amazing success of American photogrammetric mapping in this war has been, not in the development of new instruments, but rather in the exploitation to the full of the American gift for analyzing operations into their essential elements, for concentrating on details and the improvement of each individual procedure, and last, and by no means least, for coordinating these procedures into efficient systems.

On the other hand, there are being extensively used at the present time in the United States at least six quite different systems of mapping from aerial photographs (Brock System, Zeiss Stereoplanograph, Multiplex and U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey System, Trimetrogon, Soil Conservation Service System, the Forest Service System). Is this a healthy situation? I think it is and that it probably will be so for a long time to come. For it must be remembered that no system is static and that each is being continually improved as a result of working experience in building up techniques adopted for particular needs. Furthermore, by having various systems in operation at the same time the stimulus for improvement and new invention is not stifled by being confined within narrow walls.

One might object that there is a great deal of uncoordinated effort in this. The outsider's suspicions in this respect are not confirmed by investigation. There is surprisingly little unilateral action. As an indication of this, various Government mapping agencies under the able chairmanship of Mr. Randall of the Bureau of the Budget are cooperating by means of a standard cost accounting system. It is hoped that this will tend to emphasize the most efficient procedures in each system. Speaking now from the point of view of the technician, I would say in this connection that this Society plays a star role by bringing to the attention of all concerned the new achievements within these various systems, and by bringing to light the new ideas of individual workers outside these systems, so that they can be incorporated within them as desirable.

Active as the Society is at present in this respect, it can legitimately be more active in actually promoting research.

Most of us can, without any trouble at all, think of problems requiring further research that would be best handled by joint effort. To give just one example: It would be desirable at the present time to make a thorough investigation concerning the errors inherent in the photographic process and their effect in the extension and bridging of control. It is realized, of course, that much has already been done on this subject by individual groups. But the work should be analyzed and coordinated. This Society would seem to be the ideal organization to initiate technical undertakings of this kind.

To set the stage for such action, it is hoped to form a new and active research committee this year. Its first task might well be the preparation of a report that will systematically describe research on hand and proposed, and furnish a list of organizations and individuals who are undertaking or are capable of assisting in such projects.

We all recognize that a critical period of adjustment is at hand, both for members of this Society and for the Society itself. Moreover, the time, we all hope and believe, is rapidly approaching when we may see the lifting of the veil of secrecy that has cloaked many radically new and important developments in photogrammetry. It is most important that the Society be prepared for this and, because of greater freedom of action, to be in a position to assist in winning the peace even more effectively than it is assisting in winning the war.