

Incoming President's Address

Joseph P. Burns

TO BE CHOSEN President* of this Society is a real honor for which I am deeply grateful. I approach this office with a full realization of the strong influence—for better or worse that an active President may have upon the future well being of our Society.

As I see the Presidency, my main duty will be to single out the important issues, to inform myself adequately on these matters, then to generate action through judicious selection of committee chairmen. Once convinced of the proper course, I intend to use my influence and persuasive powers to guide my colleagues in the direction I consider best suited to the continued welfare of the Society.

Within my capabilities I hope to make a significant personal contribution to the continued progress of our organization. I look upon the coming year as an opportune time in which to repay, in some small measure, the profession which has offered me a lifelong series of interesting and challenging opportunities. While mapmaking can rarely be considered a source of instant wealth it does offer many aesthetic compensations. I'm sure that most of us have found deep personal satisfaction in making a tangible and worthwhile contribution to the society in which we live.

Since becoming an officer I have come to appreciate the wise guidance and good management the Society has received in past years. This tradition has been fully maintained by Colonel Diercks who has conducted Society affairs in a quite, efficient manner, leaving few if any loose ends. I will be most gratified if my performance is equally competent.

I look forward with pleasure to working with General Jacobs and his capable staff. As administrator and financial guide Larry deserves great credit for our present healthy status. In these inflationary times I regard this as a real achievement.

As many of you know, I have succeeded in temporarily demolishing our traditional practice of alternating the Presidency of our Society between governmental and non-governmental nominees. Having been elected from

the *free enterprise* sector I confounded many of my friends by returning to a more domesticated life among my former associates in the U. S. Geological Survey. Actually I should bring to this office an unusually broad perspective which may be badly needed to help bridge the gap between these two major segments of our Society. Sad to report I'm afraid at times we have a serious lack of understanding between the groups, together with a liberal sprinkling of mistrust and suspicion on both sides.

Perhaps during this coming year I can bring about in some small way a better spirit of cooperation between these two areas of interest. This will be a goal constantly before me.

Problems seem to be a way of life these days. Our Society has its share, many of which urgently require a solution. Among these are, *first*, the rising costs and diminishing revenues connected with publishing our excellent journal, a subject of immediate concern to our Publications Committee, headed by Captain Swanson. *Second*, the serious cost bind encountered by many of our sustaining members and loyal exhibitors because of the rising proliferation of technical meetings, symposia and conventions, which tend to dilute attendance while raising the unit cost of marketing and demonstrating products in our field. *Third*, the question of how best to recognize and respond to the growing importance of relatively new developments in our field such as remote sensing, close-range photogrammetry, applications in space, medicine and other fields. To accord the proper weight to these interests brings up knotty problems in the areas of publishing, scheduling meetings and allotting journal space—matters of concern which, unless recognized and properly resolved, could seriously affect our future.

A *fourth* and a very thorny-problem, is that of certification of photogrammetrists, which many of us would prefer to ignore in the hopes that it would quietly go away. I feel we are approaching a *high noon* type of showdown on this issue, which in the past has been handled with something less than *all deliberate speed*.

Reactions to this certification issue vary from complete apathy to rabid support,

* See biographical note on page 222 of the March issue of PHOTOGRAMMETRIC ENGINEERING.—Editor.

depending to some extent on whose ox is being gored. Many members take the attitude that this is not a proper subject for Society action, that this is something to be settled by those in private practice, a trade-association type action to be shunned by our professional society. If this premise were true—and this is very much subject to debate—the facts of life would still cry out for action by the Society.

From personal experience I can assure you that the present situation with regards to the private practice of photogrammetry can only be described as chaotic. Most self-styled photogrammetrists are unqualified to perform more than the simplest routine contracts. Because of the lack of accreditation, the consulting engineer or city planner plays an expensive game of Russian roulette the first time he resorts to photogrammetry. If he draws the loaded cylinder and receives poor maps, our entire profession suffers.

In the past it has always proved very difficult to bring about concerted effective action in the private field. Unlike the situation in the large government agencies where members are concentrated in large groups making for easy communication, private mapmaking is largely a *cottage* industry with some two to three hundred small companies scattered across the country. Because of the wide-ranging and eruptive nature of the work, continuity of action on an organized basis is difficult to achieve. Furthermore, many of the executives in these small companies are deeply committed to day-to-day operations and, either through lack of foresight or lack of time, are unable to unite for the common good.

And yet the Society draws over half of its financial support from members in the non-government and non-educational field, if a recent sampling is valid. It would seem obvious that the Society therefore has a strong obligation to consider the needs and desires of this substantial bloc of members.

Precedent for such action already exists to some degree. For several years we have had a Photogrammetrist Classification Committee which, although somewhat inactive, was established primarily to clarify and improve the status of photogrammetrists within the federal service.

I believe the time has come for the Society to be of real service to all of its members by affording higher recognition to our profession while aiding our fellow citizens who make use of photogrammetry in any form. I believe we should lead the way in setting performance standards, in establishing incentives for better conduct, and in singling out qualified practitioners, thereby offering the people who contract for photogrammetric services some meaningful mark of recognition by which qualified photogrammetrists may be recognized.

True this entails much labor and, if carried to adoption, would bring about some rather organic changes in our administrative machinery. Such a move would not happen overnight and would, of course, come about only after thorough study and deliberation, followed by ratification by the membership.

Much of this study has been done by Al Quinn's Professional Activities Committee which submitted its report recommending a certification program about a year ago. After approval by the Board, Colonel Diercks appointed Jim Webb to set up a committee to examine means of implementing this report. It is my intention to assist and support this group in every way in an attempt to resolve this matter.

As you can see, we do face some serious problems during the immediate future. It would be pleasant to maintain the status quo, to drift with the tide and hope things will continue unchanged. Unfortunately, problems deferred are like hidden cancers. By the time they are readily apparent to all, the time for corrective action has expired.

If we are to maintain our present state of leadership in the broad field of photogrammetry we must come to grips with and resolve these vital problems.

To do this will require much volunteer effort on the part of many members. I request your individual support and assistance in the way of committee participation, in submitting suggestions, in increasing your personal involvement in our Society activities.

With combined action and concerted effort I am sure we will continue the forward progress of this Society. To this goal I pledge my best efforts during the coming year.