

## THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

R. S. EDSALL

Vero Beach

This has been another year when extreme weather conditions have had a profound effect upon Florida agriculture. The excessive rains since the middle of July have caused considerable damage to citrus groves in low areas. Thousands of acres of farm and pasture land have been flooded, many counties are regarded as disaster areas. The need for an adequate flood control program is again forcibly brought to our attention. There has been some work done in the Central and South Florida Flood Control District but the recent flood is stark evidence that the entire program must be completed and possibly expanded if adequate relief is to be provided. The engineers estimate that even with all outlets open it will require many months for Lake Okeechobee to get back to a desirable level. We must work diligently to obtain a flood control program which will prevent the recurrence of a similar disaster. At the same time we should be ever mindful that such a program must include carefully planned water control measures with huge reservoirs to hold water for use in dry times. When you consider the drought problems of the West and Southwest you realize that Florida's rainfall is one of her biggest blessings. However, the water must be controlled if we are to have minimum damage and maximum benefit.

Florida can be truly thankful that another hurricane season has come and gone with little or no damage. I know there are many citrus growers, especially on the Lower East Coast, who are greatly relieved now that this danger period is past. Hurricane winds, with the ground so soft and full of water, would have uprooted vast numbers of trees and caused terrific damage.

In looking back over the records I find that there have been several attempts, by the Bureau of Customs Office in Washington, to curtail the inspection of baggage at our ports of entry. This year for the period May 1st through August the inspectors were instructed to make only a "spot check" of the baggage. Observations made at the ports of entry during this period indicate that the actual percentage

of baggage inspected varied from ten percent upwards. This curtailment of baggage inspection has been done primarily to reduce expense. However, there is also considerable pressure from the State Department to speed up service for the traveling public. This is a very serious situation and one which endangers the economy of Florida and the entire nation. I would like to call to Mr. Coke's attention the fact that this morning the Executive Committee of this Society went on record as being definitely opposed to the "spot checking" of baggage at our ports of entry. Furthermore, the Committee feels that the Society should make every possible effort to arouse the States and the Nation to the dangers of such a program and insist that the Bureau of Customs return to its former procedure of complete baggage inspection. I have asked Mr. Ed Ayers, our Plant Commissioner, to prepare and submit a suitable resolution for the Society to act upon at its business session tomorrow.

Speaking of our business session brings up a matter which has been a sore subject for many years. I have attended all of the meetings of this Society since 1929. Without exception, when it came time for the business sessions only a very small percentage of the members were present. I sincerely hope this year, and in the future, this situation will be changed. Your officers and Executive Committee will appreciate all of the members being present for the business sessions. We need your interest, your suggestions and your help in running the affairs of this Society.

In the years past our programs have included papers on Thursday afternoon. Every year the speakers giving papers on the closing afternoon have found themselves with very small audiences. This was not only unfair to the speakers but many members missed hearing fine papers because they felt compelled to leave early. This year, you will notice, we have changed our program so that the papers begin Tuesday afternoon and end Thursday morning. This should give everyone time to reach home Thursday afternoon. We hope you approve of this change.

At the Society meeting last year I gave you a progress report from the Citrus Budwood

Certification Committee. As a follow-up to that report I am happy to inform you that the State Plant Board now has in operation an active citrus budwood certification program and we should have certified trees available from commercial nurseries in the next three or four years.

In the early years of our Society interest was centered largely around citrus production problems. As the years went by new sections, with separate programs, were added until today we have the five sections. Our scientists and research workers have solved many of our problems and Florida is now the largest citrus producing area in the world and the winter vegetable garden of the United States. There is still one particularly knotty problem which needs a great deal of study. The little matter of obtaining satisfactory returns for our products. I believe the time has come when this Society should "put its shoulder to the wheel" and assist in the formulation of better methods for harvesting, packing and marketing our fruits and vegetables. It is not enough to grow them successfully, we must market them in such a manner that we are assured of a profitable return.

I think our Society can be justly proud of the part it has played in the activities of the Florida Agricultural Council. Our delegation, composed of Mr. Dexter Sloan, Chairman, Mr. George Wedgeworth, Mr. Kingswood Sprott

and Mr. Frank L. Holland, assisted in preparing the agricultural budget and obtaining an increase in appropriations amounting to nearly two million dollars for the biennium. In addition, the legislature approved a sum of over two and one-half million for new buildings. These much needed appropriations were obtained through the united effort of our agricultural interests plus the help and sympathetic understanding of our late Governor, Dan McCarty.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my fellow officers and members of the executive committee for their complete cooperation and assistance in managing the affairs of the Society throughout the year. I particularly wish to commend our Secretary, Dr. Ernest L. Spencer, for his untiring efforts and diligence in performing his share of the work for the Society. Our Editing Secretary, Mr. Lacy Tait and our Publication Secretary, Mr. Ralph Thompson, have done an excellent job in publishing the Proceedings in record time.

We have with us tonight a man who needs no introduction for he has been a member of this Society for many years. We have selected him to represent us as one of our Senators in Washington. We are proud to claim him as a Floridian and confident that he will never betray our trust. It is my privilege to present Senator Spessard L. Holland, Florida's senior Senator, who will introduce our guest speaker for the evening.

## COSTA RICA AND ITS AGRICULTURE

HAROLD MOWRY

*Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S.D.A.*

San Jose, Costa Rica

The opportunity of attendance at this meeting of the Horticultural Society is indeed a most gratifying privilege. For me, this visit is in the nature of a homecoming since I can say with all sincerity that here among Florida horticulturists I do feel at home.

Having just returned from two most pleasant years in the Republic of Costa Rica I should like to tell you something of that delightful little tropical country and its agriculture.

Costa Rica is the southernmost of the five Republics comprising Central America. Its area is approximately 20,000 square miles and its topography for the most part is ruggedly mountainous. Presumably nearly the whole of the country was at one time covered with forest; presently perhaps two-thirds of the area is yet wooded, much of it inaccessible to lumbering operations. Two high mountain ranges traverse the country from northwest to southeast, the northernmost a chain of dormant or mildly active volcanoes, some of which are about 12,000 feet high.

The soils of a goodly portion of the area are of volcanic origin and are highly fertile. The