



The Challenging Future for the Land Surveyor

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1964 Exam Procedures

In some States, the examinee is not permitted to take the questions out of the test room, and he is sometimes made to sign a statement that he will not disclose or discuss the contents with anyone. This situation is probably created by a lack of funds to prepare a new set of questions after every examination. But is this really a test at all? Assuming that a person is perfectly honest, all he has to do is go home, sit down, write out all the questions asked, study the subject matter, and on the next test write on the same questions. Why any board of registration makes such a farce out of a surveyor's examination is beyond comprehension. The surveyor's field of practice is sufficiently broad to preclude the necessity of repeating the same question or even the same type of question.

Comments on Examinations

The variation of the subject matter and the quality of the land surveyor's examination is extreme; some tests are difficult while others are ridiculously simple; some tests are broad in scope, others are narrow.

Perhaps the best procedure would be to divide surveyor examinations into three State groups as follows:

- Those states requiring a broad educational foundation in the sciences plus special knowledge in land surveying, and also testing in any of the following: geodesy, design of improvements, photogrammetry, and land planning.

- Those States giving examinations at the professional level but limiting the subject matter to land location procedures, general surveying (including construction staking or limited design of improvements), and land planning.

“Professional standing must be earned; it cannot be attained by self-proclamation. The standing of land surveyors in this country must rise or fall with the quality of its members.”

- Those States giving examinations at the technician level and limiting the subject to the practice of locating and describing property (sometimes including planning).

Within the first group are Indiana, Ohio, California, New York, and possibly one or two others. Last year New York passed a new act upgrading the land surveyor qualifications; a copy of the new examination was not reviewed. Not all of these States give tests commensurate with their statutory requirements.

Of the remaining States, less than half of those whose examinations were reviewed gave tests sufficiently difficult to be classified above that of the technician level. Some were of good quality.

Professional standing must be earned; it cannot be attained by self-proclamation. The standing of land surveyors in this country must rise or fall with the quality of its members. If the public thinks that land surveyors as a group have superior

knowledge, have professional behavior, and deserve to be considered professional people, only then will they be such.

Of all things that will shape the future standing of land surveyors, the quality of new members being admitted to practice is of

paramount importance. This can be regulated by critical discrimination in the process of screening candidates and by improving the quality of examinations so that those unqualified will not be permitted to practice.

Those preparing examinations can benefit their profession by composing questions that go beyond the horizon of mere factual knowledge and test candidates ability to think, to use logic and reason, to come to correct conclusions, to demonstrate good judgment, and to effectively communicate all of these to the grader. Tests should be extended into the areas of photogrammetry, electronic measurement, electronic calculations, and some elementary geodesy.

The most severe criticism of examinations is the failure to test newer areas of knowledge and to test beyond the technician level. ■

Author **Michael Pallamary** has compiled the writings and lectures of the late Curtis M. Brown. These works are published in *The Curt Brown Chronicles*.