

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

BY J. W. WINSON

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY:  
GENTLEMEN:

It is customary in learned and scientific societies to elect one of the most learned or scientific of the members to the presidential chair. The presidency is regarded as a decoration for merit, honorably achieved in research or practise. No society ever made such a violent departure from that age-old custom as you did last year when you raised to the chair one of the least important of your members; one who had done absolutely nothing in its service, and who knew less than any other member of the science to which the Society is devoted. For twelve months I have tried to discover a reason for this variation, and I can only guess that specialization has become so pronounced in the Society that you were alarmed lest it break up into unrelated divisions, and therefore, if you appointed one who held you all in reverence, and gazed at each with equal wonder and ignorance, you could pursue your courses without hindrance or interruption, because he would not know enough to interfere. If that was your reason, you have succeeded admirably, and may be congratulated on your choice.

When I joined this Society years ago, I knew nothing entomologically beyond an intimate acquaintance with the bee and the flea. I kept a few colonies and a flock of chickens. My chief motive in joining was curiosity. I wanted to know the men who could be interested eagerly in grubs and bugs, and I was astonished at the interest it gave me, not only in the science but in the members. My continued membership has been due to the agreeable characters I have met and the friendships I have gained. There are old members, admired and revered for their pioneering work, and younger folk whose zeal and optimism are most refreshing. I have received letters from a feminine member whose "mouth watered" for the aphids on my ivy, and one of the several members who have visited my home created a sensation in the village on his arrival. I met him at the station in the spring sunshine, when the Buprestidae and the Cerambycidae were flying, or so he said. His baggage, that seemed suspiciously large for a week-end visit, was flung to the ground and rummaged until a monstrous net was unpacked and set up. Then began much sweeping over ditch and sidewalk, while the natives, down for their mail, stood wondering.

It took me months to recover my good reputation for sobriety and sanity, for of course I helped with the killing-bottles. I have been in close-packed dens with other members, poring over microscopes and setting boxes, interested, certainly, in the subject, but often more enthralled by

the enthusiasm of the member whose devotion to his order has added life to his existence and has opened the folds of knowledge a little wider, that others may pass more easily. Such experiences have been very good, and have made my membership with this Society very precious.

Leaving the subject of myself, rather reluctantly, I wish to congratulate the Society on its own standing, and its mission. Good work, practical and original, is being done here; work that the layman can recognize and the learned respect and, in the system of exchange in knowledge with other Societies, this of British Columbia has no need for shame.

And as Entomologists the great public is coming more and more to respect your work. He who was yesterday a "feeble-minded butterfly catcher" is to-day regarded as the saviour and defender of crops and flowers.

The more man learns about his foods and its production, the nature of the parasites that beset himself and the creatures about him, the more he turns for light and salvation to the entomologist whom he was wont to deride.

The Christian knows that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The scientist begins to see that the last but one of the hosts that would defeat him is that of the insects, and when we regard the evils and the dangers that fly by day and creep by night, wars with human enemies seem puerile interruptions in this great campaign, which needs all our energy and enterprise. One government this year is spending ten million dollars in fighting one insect, and this without hope of extinction—only control is expected.

Geology gave us wealth in mineral and fuel; chemistry, in a thousand conveniences and comforts. Physics is easing and lighting our path, but now entomology must be given the lead, or, with all these blessings and advances, we may starve by the way. For the twenty-sixth time, you B. C. Entomologists are meeting to gather and co-relate news from the Front.

I trust the conference will be of benefit and encouragement to all.

Sir Joseph Hooker once said to a number of Scientists: "Too much of our dear-bought experience dies with us." This meeting is instituted that such experience shall not die, but shall be distributed for the enlightenment of others, and in these efforts I wish you all success.