

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

By J. W. Winson

A pleasing experience in our meetings held in Victoria is a more equable blending of the pacific Systematists with the militant Economists and therefore a more balanced conference. The Systematist, though not so much in the public eye as the Economist, is now seen to have been the prophet of a great science. That which began as a hobby has now become a crusade against a universal menace.

If people are turning to heed and to honor the Entomologist it is because they are becoming concerned for their own security.

Not only honor but fortune is now offered to the new champion. The Government of Egypt promise millions to the David or the Joseph that shall deliver the country from the worm in the cotton.

Wherever crops of vegetable or fruit are grown in large quantities there some pernicious insect foregatherers. The story of St. George and the Dragon is revived, and the Entomologist is the George who is to do it.

So serious is the world-wide conquest that England has set up an Insect Arsenal or Entomological Zoo for research where parasites are bred and studied for dispersion against the insect hosts of the Empire.

Parasites that live on the enemy and then destroys him may be more efficient than chemicals, repellants and poisons.

But the uses of guile and subtlety in making attractive lures of poisons seems to be gaining ground, and a new avenue of destruction is opening up in this direction.

If the chemist can isolate for us the essential constituent which attracts certain insects to certain plants we can use that to draw them to their death. And also taking the constituent from a plant that is repellant we can use it to disguise the plant they enjoy. This may revolutionize certain lines of the work of the economic entomologist. The science is so new in practice that the future is full of interesting possibilities, yet one may allude to an entomological conjecture of the past which has great interest.

In the dim and distant geological ages the progenitor of the modern horse ran down this continent. The horse of today is a fairly recent immigrant brought here by man, because no wild horses were found before human occupation.

But in a vastly earlier epoch the little Eohippus or his relative came over from Asia by way of Alaska and this delectable province.

He spread down the continent, but not right down, and somewhere near the limits of his extension geologists have found fossil remains of the tsetse, eloquent evidence of the power of the insect in those prehistoric ages. An entomologist has stated recently that the Arabs could carry Mohammedism in Africa no further than the range of this fly which killed their horses, so that even religions and histories have been changed enormously for lack of efficient entomologists.

To come down to the present time and to our present concerns, your Society as a whole cannot but be grateful to those members who are crystallizing and correlating their studies into systematic lists. Some are already completed, others are in preparation. This is a praiseworthy work of benefit not only to ourselves, but to those who will follow us.

If not too presumptive I should like to suggest another endeavor. Many of you are specializing so much that you are becoming exclusive and lost to the rest of us and to mankind in general. Of course the Annual Meeting corrects this isolation somewhat, but I think we are beginning to feel the need of some interpreting medium. For this I would suggest a bulletin made up by dipterists, coleopterists, lepidopterists and all other "ists" wherein each defines and explains his order, series or family as it relates to this Province and obtain Government assistance in publishing it to show the common people in a language they can understand, what is being done in this great work and how vital it is that the work and the interest be supported.