

THE IMPERIAL BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY

As the question of international effort and cooperation in the matter of controlling and preventing the spread of insects which in various ways affect human activity is occupying the attention, not only of entomologists, sanitarians and workers directly occupied in studying these many-sided problems, but also of statesmen and administrators, the formation in connection with the British Imperial service of an Imperial Bureau of Entomology at the beginning of the present year will undoubtedly interest all concerned in these problems, by whom its progress and work will be watched.

This organization is not a sudden development but a gradual outgrowth of efforts along similar lines which began in the spring of 1909. In March of that year a meeting was called by the secretary of state for the colonies at the colonial office in London, in which the present writer had the honor to take part, to discuss the formation of an entomological research committee for the purpose of furthering entomological research in the British possessions in tropical and subtropical Africa. The chief insects which it was considered desirable to study were those associated with the transmission of disease. In 1909 an entomological research committee of the colonial office was appointed by Lord Crewe, then secretary of state for the colonies, and it consisted of the chief experts in entomology and tropical medicine in Great Britain and Ireland, with Lord Cromer as chairman. Its work fell under three divisions, namely, the carrying on of investigations and entomological surveys in tropical Africa, for the purpose of which two traveling entomologists were employed; the determination of entomological material, and the publication of the work so accomplished, for which purpose the *Bulletin of Entomological Research*, a quarterly journal, was started. Through the generosity of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the committee was able also to undertake the training of a number of entomologists for service in the dominions and colonies.

On account of the valuable service which

was being rendered by the committee to the African crown colonies and protectorates, suggestions were made for the enlargement of the scope of the work of the committee. Accordingly, in June, 1911, advantage was taken of the presence in England of the prime ministers of the self-governing dominions and a conference was called by the secretary of state for the colonies to consider the desirability of further extending the work already begun by securing the cooperation and financial support of the self-governing dominions and colonies. By these means mutual assistance could be rendered by the various countries within the British Empire through the medium of a central bureau which would be engaged in the collection and interchange of information in regard to noxious insects. It was unanimously agreed that the establishment of such a central bureau was desirable, as it was realized what valuable assistance it could render in the way of disseminating information and rendering assistance in other ways. Accordingly, a tentative scheme was submitted to the governments of the various self-governing dominions and colonies for their consideration.

After due consideration and consultation a further conference was held at the colonial office in August, 1912, to which the government entomologists of the self-governing dominions and colonies and others similarly interested were invited, to discuss and work out a scheme for imperial cooperation in preventing the spread and furthering the investigation of noxious insects. At this conference the whole subject was thoroughly discussed and a proposal was evolved for the establishment of an imperial bureau of entomology to be financially supported by the various dominions and colonies and the British government.

It was proposed that the functions of the Imperial Bureau of Entomology should be as follows:

1. A general survey of the noxious insects of the world and the collection and coordination of information relating thereto, so that any British country may learn by enquiry

what insect pests it is likely to import from other countries and the best methods of preventing their introduction and spread.

2. The authoritative identification of insects of economic importance submitted by the officials of the Departments of Agriculture of Public Health throughout the empire.

3. The publication of a monthly journal giving concise and useful summaries of all the current literature which has a practical bearing on the investigation and control of noxious insects.

The scheme was accepted by the various self-governing dominions and colonies which were invited to cooperate, and the crown-colonies and British protectorates will also participate in the advantages of the Imperial Bureau of Entomology which has now been established. The former entomological research committee has become the honorary committee of management with the eminent administrator, the Earl of Cromer, as president and the scientific secretary of the committee, Mr. Guy A. K. Marshall, has been made director of the bureau and editor of the journal. The government entomologists of the dominions are *ex-officio* members of the committee of management.

The publication of the bureau's journal, which is entitled *The Review of Applied Entomology*, was commenced in January. It is being published in two parts: Series A, Agricultural, and Series B, Medical and Veterinary. As the organization and library of the bureau becomes perfected the value of this journal to entomological workers can not be overestimated, when it is remembered that there are no less than 1,700 periodicals, scientific, agricultural and medical, which may contain articles dealing with entomology, but a small proportion of which widely scattered entomologists have the opportunity of seeing or the time to consult.

An idea of one aspect of the three years work of the original entomological research committee will be gathered from the fact that the collections received from collectors in tropical Africa and other parts of the world during that time amounted to about 190,000 in-

sects, of which no less than 56,000 were actual or potential disease carriers. The value of this function of the Bureau to entomologists situated in portions of the empire where there are no collections and little literature to aid in identification work will be realized by their more fortunate fellow-workers.

It has been stated in the press that the Imperial Bureau of Entomology will serve the needs of the British Empire in a manner similar to that in which the United States Bureau of Entomology serves those of the United States. This statement, however, is not correct. Its primary function will be that of an intelligence bureau, collecting information for the use of the British countries supporting it and assisting entomologists and other officials in those countries in the identification of their material. By the methods which have been mentioned, and by the publication of *The Review of Applied Entomology*, and of *The Bulletin of Entomological Research*, it will furnish a means of assistance and of coordination of effort in the war against noxious insects which will undoubtedly soon make its services invaluable in the further development of the countries of the British Empire. International as the scope of its inquiries are, the work of the Bureau can not but prove to be one of the most potent factors in enabling us to develop the agricultural and other resources of the empire and our fellow-workers in non-British countries can avail themselves, through its journal, of some of the fruits of the Bureau's work.

C. GORDON HEWITT,
Dominion Entomologist

OTTAWA, CANADA,
March, 1913

THE COMMITTEE ON THE PACIFIC COAST
MEETING OF THE AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION

THE committee on the Pacific Coast meeting of the American Association held its first meeting at the University of California on April 12, 1913, with Director Campbell in the chair. About twenty members were pres-