

A FACTOR IN THE PROBLEM OF BIOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

DR. MAYNARD M. METCALF offers us in *SCIENCE* for March 8 some considerations on the problem of biological publication in America. Speaking for the entomological editors, as one of them, but only with a self-granted commission, I may say that the real drawback to extensive and expensive publication is the absence of adequate funds. I know of only one entomological society that has a fund for publications, the annual income of which may be between \$500 and \$600. At current rates, this allows for but 200 pages of matter per year; the rest of the funds must come from subscriptions. But entomological journals are many, and subscribers are few. This society may have an income from subscriptions of perhaps \$700 more, which gives an additional 225 pages or so, with a few illustrations. Such a publication can not devote any one of its numbers to a one-hundred page monograph with twenty plates—this would cost them at least \$500, nearly half of their total income.

The Brooklyn Entomological Society supports two publications, the *Bulletin* and *Entomologica Americana*, the former devoted to the shorter papers and the latter to monographs of one kind or another. The *Bulletin* deficit is reduced; but our income from subscriptions to *Entomologica Americana* is barely enough to publish 125 pages a year, with a few plates; but we do manage to publish about 240, without limiting our authors as to the number of plates or figures. We would like to grow bigger; and afford room for the monographs and adequate articles on various phases of entomology, but the support we receive limits us in our activities to a great degree. We have had to turn down meritorious work, because too extensive for our allotment of funds.

And that is the crux of the whole matter. These publications are unprofitable; they are run by societies at an actual loss; and, without the proper support, they are inhibited from growth.

It is too true that the fragmentary and preliminary discussions we publish are susceptible to later change and, naturally, are by no means final. But the remedy is in the hands of those interested. It may be urged that there are too many entomological journals. It is possible. But we must remember that entomology is a most extensive and active branch of biology; and the journals are far too few in comparison to the amount of first-class work that is being turned out. This lack naturally retards notably the progress of the science.

And further, there seems to be money from foundations of all kinds to finance almost anything but biological publications. An adequately financed publication in vertebrate zoology, for example, could readily publish many extensive papers suitably illustrated, which would discuss with finality matters in controversy. And this is peculiarly true of entomology. So small a sum as \$10,000 per annum would make possible the publication of a number of definitive monographs on obscure groups by authoritative workers in these groups. Meantime, they see the labor of years lying fallow, and their real contributions to science perhaps lost. Their energy and their intellectual labor are made sterile by this lack of adequate funds.

The saddest thing about being an entomological editor is the necessity imposed upon one by cruel circumstance to reject all this meritorious work, because too extensive for the meager pocketbook.

J. R. DE LA TORRE-BUENO

THE ALLEGED SCARCITY OF RESEARCH MEN

IN the review of the fifth New York meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science which recently appeared in *SCIENCE*¹ reference is made to a discussion of the difficulty of obtaining competent men for the direction of research work. I wonder if the men who took part in that discussion, and others who have voiced similar complaints, recognize and appreciate the fact that there are, in this country, many retired professional men, who have acquired a competence that renders them indifferent to salary considerations, and whose executive and administrative ability has been fully demonstrated by the success they have attained in their chosen fields of activity; and that some of these men would be very glad to become associated with research bureaus or institutions, if they were given the opportunity to carry on lines of investigation which are related to the work in which they have been engaged. Many of these men received special training in research, in their earlier years; but even if they did not, no one of experience can honestly contend that long-continued daily contact with the problems of engineering, for example, does not fully qualify men of ability either themselves to engage in what we are pleased to designate as "scientific inquiry," or intelligently to direct others in such work.

Is any effort being made to induce these retired professional men to accept positions in the various laboratories which have been, or are now being, established for the purpose of systematic research; or is

¹ February 1, 1929. pp. 107 to 131.