

OBITUARY

EDWARD BRUCE WILLIAMSON

EDWARD BRUCE WILLIAMSON, entomologist and naturalist, died at Ann Arbor, Michigan, on February 28, 1933, at the age of fifty-five. His boyhood days were spent on a farm near Bluffton, Indiana. After graduating from Ohio State University in 1898, he was assistant curator at the Carnegie Museum, 1898-99, and a fellow at Vanderbilt University, 1900-01. From 1905 to 1930 he served as president of the Wells County Bank at Bluffton, and since 1930, as research associate at the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan.

His first paper on the *Odonata* appeared in 1897 and in the interval between then and his death he published more than 65 papers on this group of insects. Much of the work was done before and after banking hours. While the papers were mainly of a systematic nature, they also contain much data of a general biological nature observed during his extensive collecting trips in the United States, Central and South America. The value of these contributions is attested by the high esteem in which he was held by entomologists the world over. In addition to his work as an entomologist he was one of the pioneer breeders of iris. He developed and placed on the market many of the best varieties and his interest in this field was maintained until the end. His interests, however, were not limited to these two fields. In his earlier years he had collected birds' eggs and during his boyhood days he was much interested in pets. In fact, he was interested in all living things, a naturalist in the true sense of the word.

The things which have been said, however, give to the stranger no real concept of Bruce Williamson. One had to know him personally in order to appreciate him. He was a rare personality; an amateur in spirit and enthusiasm, energetic, stimulating alike to the non-scientist as well as the scientist. So contagious was his enthusiasm for natural phenomena that he was able to interest either children or adults in the things he was doing. It was literally impossible to be around him without getting an insect net to chase dragon-flies or without planning an iris garden. One could not remain static in his presence, because of his seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy. Perhaps, because of the use of so much energy, his death came somewhat prematurely, but who can say that he did not live more richly and abundantly than

those of us who creep at a slower pace. We who had the privilege of knowing him intimately prized his friendship in a way difficult to express in words, and hence his loss to us is the greater. The world would be richer if we had more naturalists like him.

FERNANDUS PAYNE

RECENT DEATHS

THE death is announced of Dr. Frank Mann Life, physicist, dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Arizona. He was in his sixty-third year.

JOHN LEMUEL STONE, emeritus professor of farm practise at the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University, died on March 8. He was in his eightieth year.

CHARLES E. EVELETH, a vice-president of the General Electric Company and formerly manager of the Schenectady plant, died on March 25, at the age of fifty-seven years.

DR. ROYAL EDGAR JEFFS, associate professor of botany in the University of Oklahoma, died on February 17, at the age of fifty-three years.

ARTHUR BLISS SEYMOUR, since 1886 assistant in the cryptogamic herbarium at Harvard University, died on March 29, at the age of seventy-four years.

DR. FERNANDO WOOD MARTIN, formerly vice-president of Randolph-Macon Woman's College and for thirty-six years head of its department of chemistry, died on March 22, at the age of sixty-nine years. He retired in 1929 as emeritus professor.

THE REV. FREDERICK L. ODENBACH, S.J., for the past forty years meteorologist and seismologist at John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, died on March 15, at the age of seventy-five years. It was through Father Odenbach's influence and initiative that seismographic equipment was installed and stations were organized at fifteen Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and Canada during the years 1909 to 1912.

DR. WILLIAM HENRY PORTER, professor emeritus of pathology and internal medicine at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School, died on March 27. He was in his eightieth year.

DR. JOHN MILLAR THOMSON, emeritus professor of chemistry at King's College, London, died on March 22, at the age of eighty years.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR THE OVARIAN FOLLICULAR HORMONE

DURING the past summer the Health Organization of the League of Nations held a meeting on the stand-

ardization of the estrus-producing hormone. Sir Henry Dale presided over the conference, which was composed of A. Butenandt, E. A. Doisy, E. Laqueur, G. F. Marrian and A. S. Parkes. In an abbreviated

form the most important points of the agreement were:

(1) That a material standard preparation should be preserved as a central standard of reference.

(2) That this material standard should consist of the hydroxy-ketonic form of the hormone.

(3) That the various countries will be invited to contribute samples which will be combined to form the standard preparation.

(4) That the unit will be the specific estrus-producing activity contained in 0.1 gamma of the standard preparation.

(5) That by the term "estrus-producing activity" is to be understood the power of producing in an adult female animal completely deprived of its ovaries an accurately recognizable degree of the changes characteristic of normal estrus, *i.e.*, the changes in cellular contents of the vaginal secretion of the rat or mouse.

(6) That the comparison of an unknown preparation with the standard can only be accurately made if the conditions of administration and interpretation of results are identical.

(7) That a bio-assay procedure, which has been proved to be capable of determining the equality of activity with an error not greater than plus or minus 20 per cent., should be used in comparing a preparation with the international standard.

(8) That proper precautions will be observed in the preparation and storage of the international standard. The international standard will be kept at the National Institute for Medical Research in London, but a portion will be available for distribution in each country.

The adoption of an international standard should solve many of the vexing problems of bio-assay of the estrus-producing hormone. In the past, many modifications of the original Allen-Doisy bio-assay procedure have been introduced. This has led to a great many different units, since so many different factors alter the absolute weight of the hormone required to produce estrus. The result was that no investigator could compare his results with those of another investigator with any feeling of assurance of accuracy. With the establishment of an international standard it is hoped that investigators will make use of this standard preparation and that pharmaceutical houses will also label their products in terms of the international unit.

E. A. D.

THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PHYSICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THE eleventh International Symposium on Physics at the summer session of the University of Michigan will be held as usual. Owing to reduced university appropriations its support has been provided for from private sources.

The foreign lecturers this year will be Professor

Niels Bohr, of the University of Copenhagen, Nobel laureate, the founder of modern atomic physics, and Professor Enrico Fermi, of the Royal University at Rome, authority on quantum theory. Professor John H. Van Vleck, of the University of Wisconsin, specialist in the theory of magnetism, will also lecture, as will Professors Ernest F. Barker, David M. Dennison and George E. Uhlenbeck, of the university.

Dr. Edward H. Kraus, dean of the summer session, states that the symposium brings together annually leading native and foreign authorities who conduct classes and meet together with their students in give and take discussions of both the theoretical and experimental aspects of the laws of the atom, infra-red rays, the revelations of the spectroscope and like problems.

In recent years physicists from outside the United States who have attended the symposium include Professors Erhenfest, of Leiden; Heisenberg, of Leipzig; Sommerfeld, of Munich; Pauli, of Zurich, and Kramers, of Utrecht, as well as Brillouin, of Paris; Dirac, of Cambridge, and Milne, of Oxford.

GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY AT THE CHICAGO MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

SECTION E of the American Association for the Advancement of Science will meet in Chicago on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, June 20, 21 and 22 in conjunction with members of the Geological Society of America, the Geographical Society of Chicago and other affiliated organizations. The Hotel Southmoor at Sixty-seventh Street and Stony Island, will serve as headquarters. An informal dinner will be held on Tuesday evening at the University of Chicago and will be followed by a lecture on "Variation and Evolution in Earth History" by Professor Albrecht Penck, Berlin, who with Professor J. J. Sederholm, Helsingfors, Finland, is among the foreign guests who will address the members of this section and their friends. The meetings will be held at the University of Chicago and at the Field Museum of Natural History.

The Tuesday morning session will be devoted to papers on general geology and, if necessary, the reading of papers will be continued on Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday afternoon there will be a joint session with the physicists, chemists and astronomers, devoted to a symposium on "The Measurement of Geologic Time." Among those who will participate in this symposium are: A. F. Kovarik, A. C. Lane, H. Schlundt, A. V. Grosse and W. D. Urry. For the Thursday session, which will be held jointly with the Geographical Society of Chicago, a program of papers on geography is being arranged by Professor Charles C. Colby, of the University of Chicago.