OBITUARY

WILMON NEWELL
1878–1943

. . . the work never is done while the power to work remains.

—*Mr. Justice Holmes.*

WORK was a passion with Wilmon Newell, as the record of his life reveals. He believed in hard work, seemed to have a thirsty zest for it, and he, setting the example, insisted on all those who were associated with him exerting their best and most efficient effort. He accomplished much in his field, but expressed regret at the end because "There are so many things I want to do."

His two greatest achievements—eradication of citrus canker and eradication of the Mediterranean fruit-fly—saved the citrus industry of Florida and the nation. Citrus canker, a disease spread by a bacterium, came to Florida in 1911 on trees of trifoliate orange and satsuma from Japan and was recognized as a very dangerous menace to the citrus industry in 1914. Shortly after Dr. Newell assumed his duties as plant commissioner for Florida in 1915, he resolved, with surgical decision, to remove the canker growth from the industry.

The magnitude of the eradication task is recognized by bacteriologists and plant pathologists and is clearly shown by the record. Cankerous trees were found on 515 properties in 26 Florida citrus counties, and the only way in which it could be stamped out was to burn the affected trees. Nearly 250,000 grove trees and 2,740,000 nursery trees were destroyed in Florida, while 840,000 grove trees were destroyed in other citrus-producing Gulf states. The eradication campaign required twelve years and cost more than two and a half million dollars, but it succeeded in removing the canker threat to the nation's citrus industry.

Newell's second task for himself and his Florida Plant Board staff came in 1929, after his work and leadership in the canker campaign and other agricultural activities had, eight years before, resulted in his appointment to the dean's chair in the University of Florida College of Agriculture and director of the university's agricultural extension service and agricultural experiment station. The Mediterranean fruit-fly was discovered in a grove near Orlando, and a prompt survey revealed that it had spread to 20 of the state's heaviest producing counties. After learning that the fly had been found in Florida, Newell's decision was almost immediate: eradicate.

The Federal government approved of his eradication proposal and provided the major part of the funds for prosecuting the vigorous campaign which culminated eighteen months later in triumph over the pest. A greatly augmented Plant Board staff, many entomologists and hundreds of other workers were necessary to carry out the campaign. Since 1931 there has been no evidence of the fly in Florida.

These successful campaigns—against the canker and the Mediterranean fruit-fly—are considered two of the most remarkable achievements in the whole history of man's warfare against plant pests.

Before going to Florida, Newell served as entomologist in his native state of Iowa, in Texas, Georgia and Louisiana, and it was while he was chief entomologist for the Louisiana Crop Pest Commission that he developed the method of dusting with lead arsenate to control the cotton boll weevil and completed studies on the Argentine ant which provided the basis for control of this pest.

While in Texas he made extensive studies of bees and carried on bee-breeding experiments. He also originated the practice of burning colonies infected with American foul-brood to eradicate this disease, a practice that has been widely adopted by apiculturists.

In Florida, as director of the university's experiment station and, later (1938), as provost for agriculture at the university, his research activities were primarily of an administrative nature, his efforts being largely responsible for the great expansion of the experiment station and the employment of outstanding men to work on the state's agricultural problems.

His interest in the tung tree was responsible for the development of the tung industry in Florida and other Southern states. He initiated research at the Florida station which showed conclusively that tung trees could be grown profitably in the United States, and this research led to expansion of plantings to other states.

Always cognizant of the value of the great Everglades region, he inaugurated experiments which revealed that the fertile soil would produce bumper crops if it received applications of copper sulphate in the proper amounts. Rapid development of the highly important winter vegetable industry followed.

Research in all branches of Florida agriculture made noteworthy progress during his administration and the state's farmers, growers and livestock producers have received great benefits from the findings of the institution.

As director of the university's extension service, he employed well-trained, efficient and earnest men and women to carry on demonstration work over Florida, and the result has been notable improvement in individual farming and rural living.

In his desire to accomplish and serve he never spared himself and he asked the best and most energetic efforts, likewise, of those who served with him. He achieved much and the people of Florida and the nation have benefited from his labors.

HAROLD MOWRY
FLORIDA EXPERIMENT STATION

DEATHS AND MEMORIALS

AUGUST BUSCK, who served in the U. S. Department of Agriculture for more than forty-five years as specialist in Microlepidoptera, died on March 7 at the age of seventy-four years.

DR. MARGARET E. MALTBY, associate professor of physics, retired, of Barnard College, Columbia University, died on May 3 at the age of eighty-three years.

DR. LIONEL ROBERT WILBERFORCE, professor of physics at the University of Liverpool from 1900 until his retirement in 1935 with the title emeritus, died on April 1 at the age of eighty-two years.

THE Smithsonian Institution, Washington, has been given a portrait of the late Dr. George Washington Carver. The presentation was made on May 2 by Vice-President Wallace.

A RESOLUTION to designate February 11 of each year as Thomas Alva Edison Day in commemoration of his birthday was introduced in the Senate on May 2.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM

IN his report on the condition and operation of the U. S. National Museum for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1943, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, director of the U. S. National Museum, states that appropriations for the maintenance and operation of the museum for the year amounted to $892,630, which was $61,652 more than for the previous year.

Although there has been a decrease in the total number of visitors to the museum below that normal for times of peace, the number recorded, 1,355,269, indicates the great interest that exists in the exhibits. The change in hours to allow the public halls to be open all day Sunday has permitted many people to visit the buildings whose time schedules would not have otherwise made such visits possible. This is particularly true of service men and women, about 2,000 of whom have been included among the visitors each week end.

Last year's report described steps taken for the adequate safeguard of collections. These precautions have gone forward, and a program of training has been initiated among groups of employees for the protection of visitors, employees and the various buildings. Air-raid alarm systems have been installed, fire-fighting, air-raid and first-aid equipment procured, air-raid shelters designated, and complete black-out facilities where necessary established. Practice air-raid drills were held, both in cooperation with the District of Columbia and independently of the city-wide drills.

Throughout the year members of the staff have been occupied with work connected with the conduct of the war, either through direct contact with various war agencies or through the Ethnogeographic Board. This has included "spot" information in various fields, research and experiment. The variety of these subjects is indicated by the following enumeration of some of the items on which data were requested: Camouflage plants; natural vegetation of specific regions; illustrations of poisonous plants and of emergency food plants and data regarding them; destruction and mosquito-harboring epiphytes; distribution of certain plants of known economic importance; botanical exploration; the palatability of the flesh of land, freshwater and marine animals, their use for food and methods of capture; the serviceability of hides and skins for various purposes; disease transmission; noxious, poisonous or otherwise dangerous animals; intermediate hosts of animal and human parasites; aid in the preparation of survival manuals and other military and naval handbooks; distributional lists of insects and other animals of medical importance; outlines for insect surveys in foreign areas; instruction in mosquito identification; collection and preservation of specimens, especially those of medical importance; supplying duplicate sets of insect material not otherwise readily obtainable for the use of Army and Navy medical schools; biological and oceanographic problems; marine fouling organisms; bibliographic surveys; recommendations regarding personnel.

Assistance has been given in the identification of tribal culture patterns chiefly of the island peoples of the West Pacific area and of continental southeastern Asia. Other information provided, in this instance obtained from museum photographic files, related to the need of our aviators and soldiers to recognize religious caste markings, and, to assist in the orientation of aviators, the types of house construction in various parts of southern Asia. A mass of information directly based on the collections was given to such agencies as the Board of Economic Warfare and the War Production Board, bearing directly on the development of the use of substitute materials for civilian use. Various articles describing the more remote