

OBITUARY

DR. PETER I. WOLD AS PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS AT UNION COLLEGE 1920-1945

COMPARED to other physicists whom I have known, Dr. Peter I. Wold was fortunate in combining natural gifts with varied study and experience in academic teaching and administration in China and the United States as a crown to his practical work with government bureaus in Washington and long connection with the laboratory of the Western Electric Company. In 1920 at the age of thirty-nine, he became head of the Department of Physics of Union College that had suffered from past neglect during and after the first World War. To Dr. Wold could be applied what President Charles Eliot of Harvard said of one of his young professors, "A gentleman, and an able scholar, teacher and administrator." He had exuberant enthusiasm and robust health; a far-seeing vision for his ideal department of physics; abounding energy; a humanistic background and an ability to cooperate with his colleagues. This belief in the Biblical admonition of, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find" captured the imagination of the college trustees, especially Mr. E. W. Rice, Jr., and resulted in a new laboratory building, enlarged staff and an ever up-to-date curriculum. Dr. Wold possessed a rare ability to judge men for his staff, surrounding himself with brilliant, industrious and resourceful young scholars. For twenty-five years he labored with others to improve and integrate the whole curriculum for the bachelor of science degree, making it broad and comprehensive, yet giving scope for the training of specialists, by the inclusion of research for qualified students and leading to select graduate courses. The later success of his students tells the best story.

Dr. Wold had the gift of delivering scholarly and thrilling lectures adapted to the understanding of popular, even youthful, audiences, for he spiced his exposition with humorous asides, as he performed his mysterious experiments with the air of a skilful conjuror!

GEORGE DWIGHT KELLOGG

LAWRENCE JOHN PALMER

LAWRENCE JOHN PALMER, who died at Anchorage, Alaska, on June 20, 1945, was born to Axel R. and Laura Lundberg Palmer in Rockford, Illinois, on January 19, 1893. He was educated in the public schools of Illinois and at the University of Nebraska, where he received the B.S. degree in 1915. He was employed summers and after graduation in the Forest Service, in which organization he was assigned to grazing studies of which he was in charge in District

4 (Intermountain Region) in 1917-18. He then transferred to the Biological Survey to undertake reindeer grazing investigations in Alaska. He attained the rank of senior biologist in charge of the Reindeer Experiment Station at the Agricultural College of Alaska, 1928-36, returned to the Forest Service as principal forest ecologist at the Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, 1936-37, and again to the Biological Survey in 1937 as principal biologist in investigations of the wildlife resources of Alaska. In 1944 he transferred to the Office of Indian Affairs.

In the early 1920's, when the only means of travel in northwestern Alaska during the winter season was by dog and reindeer team, Palmer made a survey of reindeer herds all along the coast of Bering Sea from the Kuskokwim River to Kotzebue Sound. During this period he began the collection of lichens and other tundra plants that was to become one of the largest of its kind.

Palmer, a tireless field worker, was highly respected by the several factions that developed as a result of the white man's attempt to commercialize and build up an export trade in Alaskan reindeer. In 1925, he brought a boatload of wild caribou bulls from the Yukon Valley to Nunivak Island for cross-breeding with reindeer.

While in charge of the Reindeer Experiment Station at the Agricultural College (now the University of Alaska), he conducted nutritional studies with musk oxen and Dall's mountain sheep, as well as with reindeer. He spent two seasons on Kenai Peninsula on moose range examination, and carried on similar work relating to caribou and mountain sheep in central Alaska.

Palmer was author or joint author of publications on range resources and management, the western range as a home for wildlife, and on animal and plant resources of Alaska, particularly the reindeer and their care. A manuscript report on a "Study of the Alaska Tundra with Reference to its Reactions to Reindeer and Other Grazing" awaits publication by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

In World War I, Palmer was in active service with the U. S. Naval Reserve in 1918; he was retained on the inactive list until 1921. In connection with the Alaskan work referred to, he served also as fur warden in enforcing laws and regulations protecting fur-bearing animals in the Territory.

At the time of his death or in comparatively recent years, he was a member of the following organizations: American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Forestry Association, American