

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

Geographical Society, Ecological Society of America, Society of American Foresters, Society of Mammalogists and the Wildlife Society.

He is survived by Inez Muriel Hodges Palmer, to

whom he was married at Fairbanks, Alaska, in 1934; there are no children.

W. L. MCATEE

FRANK DUFRESNE

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE IN GREAT BRITAIN

A MEMORANDUM drawn up by the British Ecological Society on wildlife conservation and ecological research from the national standpoint, as reported in *The Times*, London, states that the protection, scientific study and intelligent use and enjoyment of native plant life and animal life can only be brought about satisfactorily if the State takes a leading responsibility. It is pointed out that local or private bodies, however well informed, are not in a position to discover, or to hold, the correct balance between the complex and conflicting interests which are deeply involved in many wildlife problems. The memorandum reads:

There appears to be no other satisfactory method than to place the responsibility for advice and coordination upon a separate body acting under the Privy Council. It is recommended that a limited number of areas should be selected which are of sufficient scientific importance to warrant their acquisition by the State for the primary purpose of the conservation and scientific study of the principal types of plant and animal community represented in this country. These national reserves should be managed by a national service of conservators and wardens, under the direction of a national authority, who should proceed under powers similar to those employed for the acquisition of land for State forests. A national biological survey should be established to concern itself with the constantly changing wild and naturalized flora and fauna. This body should be charged with fact-finding, research and advice on the conservation, regulation, control and management of plant and animal life in Great Britain.

At least one general ecological research institute with suitable laboratories should be established by and under the powers granted to the proposed national authority. At this institute facilities should be provided for investigations by workers from the universities and the closest touch should be maintained between the institute and the university departments carrying on ecological research, including the development of humane methods of pest control. There should be established, under a Committee of the Privy Council, an Ecological Research Council as the national authority to cover the vast and hitherto neglected field of research. The pressing need is to extend the field of biological research beyond that now covered. With good sense and sound management overlapping of work or competition for money should never arise.

COMMISSIONS IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, REGULAR ARMY

1. The Surgeon General invites attention of all Medical Department officers and former officers, other than those retired, of both male and female component corps to War Department Circular 243, dated 10 August 1945. Subject: "Interests in Commissions in the Regular Army," a summary of which follows:

(a) Present indications are that a number of outstanding officers who have proved their capabilities in this emergency will be needed in the Regular Army peacetime establishment. Until appropriate legislation is enacted, the War Department can not announce the conditions which will govern selection of these officers or the number required. However, it is desired that officers who have served in the emergency, whether or not they are still on active duty, be given the opportunity of indicating their interest in obtaining a Regular Army commission. An officer making such a statement of interest may go off active duty or remain in the service without prejudice to his chances of being tendered a commission when legislation is enacted. It is the intention of the War Department that the fact that an officer has not remained in active service will not affect the grade to be offered or the position he will occupy on the promotion list.

(b) The plan for selecting and integrating officers into the Regular Army officers corps, as well as the size and composition of that corps, will finally be determined by Congress. The War Department will recommend that these officers integrated into the Regular Army be of such age and physical condition as will permit them to serve for a reasonably long period before being retired. No officer will be appointed in a grade higher than that which he held in wartime.

(c) The content of this circular will be brought to the attention of every officer at the earliest opportunity.

2. Officers currently on active military duty and who are interested in being considered for commission in the Regular Army, following enactment of appropriate legislation, may submit a statement of interest to their immediate commanding officer as outlined in the above mentioned circular.

3. Officers and former officers other than those retired who have served since 7 December 1941, and who have been relieved from active military duty under honorable conditions, may submit their statement of interest as outlined in the above mentioned circular direct to The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D. C.