

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Nova Scotia Institute of Science

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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(Read October 19, 1942)

The Nova Scotian Institute of Science is about to complete its eightieth session with this annual meeting. A brief review of the past session will show that it was very satisfactory from the standpoint of the number of meetings held, the quality of the papers presented, and the attendance. There were six ordinary meetings at which 16 papers were read, and 3 demonstrations were inserted in the programmes at various times. The papers classified as to subject included:

Biochemistry	4	Bacteriology	3
Physiology	5	Fisheries	1
Botany	2	Nutrition	1

Classified as to the sources of origin they represent.

Biochemistry	4	Fisheries	5
Physiology	3	Pharmacology	2
Botany	2		

The average attendance was 22. For the second time in two sessional years, members of the Institute were privileged to attend an extraordinary meeting held on October 23, 1941. At this meeting Dr. H. H. Brown, Director of the Sponge Fisheries Investigation of the Bahamas, gave a masterly address on "The Sponge Fisheries of the West Indies."

Throughout the session the Council has been busy with

details which are often of the utmost importance to the Institute. Through advices from the Treasurer it was found that there were many names on the list of members which should be dropped because of delinquency on the matter of annual dues. Two changes were made in the By-Laws to control this situation in the future; (1) that the Council shall each year review the list of members for consideration of their status and the imposition of penalties, (2) that ordinary members leaving Halifax automatically become associate members or student members during the session or sessions that they are away. Vacancies in the Editorial Board were filled through the appointment of Dr. Pelluett, Dr. Bronson and Dr. Heard. Since Dr. Heard has accepted a new position at McGill, Dr. Hess has been asked to appoint another representative. Before leaving these specific references to the work of the Council, I feel bound to make some comment on this body. Members of the Institute who have never sat on the Council, do not realize the degree of responsibility for the welfare of the Institute, that Council accepts. It has been my privilege to be associated with the Council for six years. During that time I have failed to ascertain one single case in which the Council did not attack the problem at hand with rational thinking and unmistakable fidelity to the best interests of the Institute as a whole.

To-day we see a world at arms, a future of vagueness and uncertainty. We are living in a country whose most cherished freedoms, ideals, and institutions are seriously threatened. Possibly we might profit by trying to picture those happier and more promising days more than eighty years ago when the Nova Scotian Institute of Science was born and another small torch was lighted. How bright that torch was to burn in the future, none of the founders of this Institute could guess. To them it meant the opportunity to meet, to discuss, to be inspired to greater efforts in the various fields of science as they then existed. The opportunity to publish through the Institute's own "Transactions" must have

been considered by the early members an achievement in itself. We, the present members have seen the original purpose of the "Transactions" unavoidably obscured by the tremendous increase in the number of scientific journals, the steady trend toward specialization, and the resultant competitive aspect that most authors of scientific papers can't ignore. Nevertheless, we would do well to think of our publication as the keystone of our whole organization. At times, the torch which we now carry has flickered dimly for various reasons, but never more seriously than when opinions that the journal should be discontinued, are cast about. We have been so accustomed over a period of years to the idea of huge enterprises, colossal figures, and concentrated power, that we often lose the sense of perspective which once lead us to consider that modest enterprise and limited activities were useful and worthwhile. Thus we really owe a great debt to the contributors, the editors, and all those who during the long years have concurred in the belief that the journal not only serves the purpose of bringing to us a valuable exchange list, but in addition, it is in itself worthwhile and identified with the very existence of the Institute. Moreover, a casual glance at the list of papers which appear in recent volumes of the "Proceedings," will show that a majority of them are of special significance to Nova Scotians. Possibly some will recall that the first paper read before the Institute was "The Common Herring of Nova Scotia." The bulk of our latest volume is made up of two papers, "The Grasses of Nova Scotia" and "The Dragon Flies of Nova Scotia."

One outstanding problem in the affairs of the Institute has been solved through the personal interest and work of the Corresponding Secretary. I refer to the new arrangements which have been made to house back volumes and reprints of the Proceedings in the Medical and Dental Library. It has been actually, a dirty job. It is but one more illustration of a member of the Council and an officer of the Institute quietly giving his time and labor that our organization shall profit.

In closing I should like to make two comments. To-day we are living in a world which has witnessed national ambition and national jealousies develop to the point where we are all caught in the crazy, screaming vortex of a global war. Yet, during the past twenty years here at Halifax, Canada, no less than four United States citizens have been elected to the highest office in the Nova Scotian Institute of Science. Of the two who have been in office during the present war, one was elected months before the United States became a belligerent by the side of Canada and Great Britain. Finally, though the Institute as a body has not been called to contribute to the war effort, we should take great pride in the fact that the Canadian and United States governments have already required the services of an impressive list of our members, that in all probability new names will be added in the months to come.