

Annual Report, 1916 ALBERTA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Report for the Year Ending November 30th, 1916.

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Alberta Natural History Society was held on Wednesday, 39th November, 1916, in the Library of the City Hall. Red Deer.

REPORT OF INNISFAIL BRANCH.

Mr. Wm. Geary reported that the financial assets of his branch amounted to \$28.00 (Twenty-eight Dollars), and that the value of the library books equalled \$25.00 (Twenty-five Dollars), as nearly as could be estimated.

REPORT OF ERSKINE BRANCH.

Mrs. S. S. Judd stated that the members of this branch numbered thirty one. Seven regular and two special meetings had been held during the current year. Three book prizes had been awarded to children at the Stettler Fair on July 1st, but no field day had been held on account of adverse weather conditions.

A picnic-dinner took place at the school house, and short Nature discussions were delivered. The library contains twenty-four books.

Financial statement:

Balance in hand Dec. 10th, 1915	\$44.20
Receipts for current year	<u>22.50</u>
	\$66.70
Expenditure for current year	<u>\$38.04</u>
Balance in hand Nov 29th, 1916	28.66
	- \$66.70

REPORT OF SECRETARY-TREASURER.

Mr. C. B. Horsbrugh reported as follows:

During the year five ordinary meetings and one special meeting were held.

Prizes were donated for Natural History subjects at the Red Deer Fair in July, and were awarded to:

Miss Millie Meeres, Collection of Alberta Wild Flowers, \$3.00.

Miss Millie Meeres. Composition on Bird Life. \$1.00.

Miss Lilian Gudmundson, Collection of Alberta Insects. \$2.25.

A grant of \$2.00 was given for the same purpose to the Water Glen School.

The annual grant of \$10.00 was made to the Erskine Branch, with an additional increase of \$5.00 to mark appreciation of considerable progress, and which may be maintained in future years should the work accomplished warrant this expenditure.

The annual grant of \$40.00 was donated to the Red Deer Library Board for purchase of Natural History books and magazines.

An addition of fourteen members to the list of Id 15 now swells the total membership to twenty-six.

The Red Deer branch of The Alberta Natural History Society having ceased to exist as an independent one, its funds, amounting to \$71.50 have been added to the funds of the parent society.

Through the generosity of Mr. F. C. Whitehouse of Red Deer, and Messers

K. Bowman and D. Mackie of Edmonton, two show cases for insects have been filled with an interesting and valuable collection of Alberta Moths and Butterflies, representing a number of families, and hung in the Public Library at Red Deer. These exhibition cases and their contents of the property of the Society, expenses for which have been met from its funds.

The following Officers were elected for the ensuing year:

Hon. President, Hon. Duncan Marshall.

1st Vice-President, Mr. H. A. Craig.

2nd Vice-President, Mr. E. Michener, M. P. P.

President. Mr. F. C. Whitehouse.

1st Vice-President, Mrs. W. A. Cassels.

2nd Vice-President, Dr. H. George.

Directors: — Mrs. Cottingham. Mrs. George. Mrs. Parnely. Miss Pyson. Miss Cole. Mr. R. E. Piske. Mr. E. Wilton.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT NOV. 1915 TO NOV. 1916.

RECEIPTS

Balance in hand	\$105.94
Red Deer Branch	71.50
Government Grant	100.00
Subscriptions	<u>7.25</u>
	\$284.69

EXPENDITURES

Expenses of Delegates	\$ 16.25
News Publishing Co	8.75
Prizes, Red Deer Fair	6.25
Prizes, Water Glen School	2.00
Secretary's Salary	15.00
Grant to R. D. Library Bd	40.00
Grant to Erskine Branch	15.00
Insect Exhibition Cases	9.95
Postages , .	1.55
Balance in hand	169.94

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, DR. GEORGE.

(Being the Executive Report for 1916.)

In past years in our Society it has been the custom on the occasion of the Annual Meeting for the Presidential address to be made at the business session in the afternoon, and owing to press of time it has usually been brief.

Properly speaking, the Presidential address is the Executive Report -the epitome of the year's work — and this year it was decided to give it premier place in the evening proceedings.

Early this year it was considered advisable to appoint committees to prepare check lists of certain groups for this district. The committees were as follows:

Birds: — Mrs. Cassels, The President. Dr. George, and Mr. C. B. Korsbrugh.

Plants:— Mrs. George, Miss Cole and Mr. H. H. Gaetz.

Dragonflies: — Mr. F. C. Whitehouse.

Good progress has been made on the bird list, and by next Annual Meeting it should be complete. During the year Mr. Horsbrugh has continued his observations on bird-life and habits, and will give the Results this evening.

The preparation of a botanical list is necessarily a protracted work, possibly of some years, as great care must be exercised to avoid errors. As a preliminary step Professor J. Lewis of the University of Alberta. Edmonton, has been consulted, and he has kindly assented to give his assistance in every way possible. The loss of the capable botanist. Mr. H. H. Gaetz, on this Committee will be deeply felt and it can only be hoped that his appointment to the Chair of Pharmacy at the University of Alberta will give his scientific attainments a still wider scope.

The third list, that of the dragon-flies of the Red Deer district, dealing as it does with a comparatively small order, has been completed, and Mr. Whitehouse will this evening give this meeting the result of his observations and exhibit specimens of all the dragon-flies enumerated.

In the West one of the obstacles to Natural History study has been the lack of literature. That this should not be the case in the Red Deer District our Society has, for the last three years, made grants of forty dollars to the Red Deer Public Library, specifying only that the selection of the books purchased shall be at our discretion. The result of these grants is that there is growing, available to all, a Natural History Library of very real value. The works range from strictly scientific text-books and popular text-books, suitable for adult students, to juvenile Natural History stories.

With regard to field work, the fact that papers on three entirely different groups are to be given this evening is indicative of our activities. Apart from such evidence, however, it should be mentioned that valuable work in entomology is being carried

out by other members of our Society over a wider field than the immediate vicinity of Red Deer — in fact as far distant as Nordegg, Edmonton and Pochahontas in Jasper Park.

Next year it will be the aim of the Executive to place on record at the Annual Meeting particulars of the collecting referred to, that is, a specific list of the rarer and more interesting captures. It is to be regretted that school children, under the guidance of their teachers, do not take a greater interest in Natural History study, and compete in larger numbers for the prizes offered annually by our society. A love of nature is instinctive in most children, but sympathetic encouragement is necessary for its proper development.

At the September meeting Mr. Whitehouse offered to present to the society for permanent exhibition in the Public Library at Red Deer, a case each of moths and butterflies, if the society would provide suitable cases. The offer was gladly accepted and the cases are now duly installed.

The insects are in scientific order, and completely named, and it is hoped that the specimens will not only enable students to readily identify insects collected, but also serve to show how such insects should be mounted. In order to make the exhibits as representative as possible, Mr. Whitehouse called upon our Edmonton members. Messrs. Bowman and Mackie, for a number of specimens, and to them our thanks are due.

This report could not be more fittingly concluded than by expressing the very sincere appreciation of our society for the assistance accorded by the Honourable Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, in publishing the transactions of our society, and special papers, in the annual report of his department, as Appendix P, and in authorizing that copies shall be sent to all our members.

It would be beyond the finances of our society otherwise to publish the records of its work however interesting and useful these might be, the result would be lost.

For the third year I lie to submit an entomological report to the Alberta Natural History Society for the Red Deer district:

INSECT PESTS.

M. distria (The Forest Tent Caterpillar) .— This pest proved less troublesome in the City of Red Deer than during 1914 and 1915, due to masses being deposited on the trees in 1915, being destroyed by an egg parasite this spring. I examined a number of egg masses in April, and found the parasites at work. The facts were duly reported to the Dominion Entomologist at Ottawa. In the country, however, particularly around Sylvan entirely denuded the trees of leaves. After the white poplars were stripped they attacked balm, birch, etc., and besides spoiling the landscape, became an insufferable nuisance, as they swarmed everywhere.

Mrs W. A. Tassels observed wrens removing the caterpillars from the vicinity of their nests, also that the caterpillars would succumb if exposed to hot sunshine for too long a time when seeking a place to pupate.

Mr. Horsbrugh noted beetles attacking the caterpillars on the ground beneath the trees. Some of beetles were taken and mounted and later at the request of the Department of Entomology, were forwarded to Ottawa.

They proved to be *Calasoma tepidum* and *Upis ceramboides*. and surprise was expressed that the latter should be found attacking caterpillars, though it is "in the ordinary course of nature" with the former. The matter is one of both economic and scientific interest, and further investigation next year is highly desirable.

Galerucella decora (The Willow Leaf Beetle) — In my report of last year I commented on the disfiguration of the landscape in this district effected by the willow leaf beetle, and I was prepared for a recurrence this year. True, in early spring I found a number of adult beetles on the willows in Gaetz Park, but the brood then apparently died out. In mid-June, however, Calgary papers reported that the foliage of trees in that city was being destroyed by a beetle, which from descriptions published, was undoubtedly the insect under discussion.

Cutworms. — No reports have come to my knowledge of the cutworm group being particularly troublesome during 1916 in this district, though the red-backed cutworm, *Euxoa ochrogaster*, always effects more or less damage in gardens.

The Cabbage Root Maggot. — This pest causes a considerable amount of annoyance and not a little damage every year to cabbages, garden turnips, cauliflowers, etc. and horticulturists should welcome Bulletin No. 12. recently published by the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Entomological Branch, dealing specially with the subject.

One of the means of control recommended appears very simple, and may well be mentioned here, viz., a disk of tar paper, not to be wrapped around the stem of the plant, as is sometimes done to ward off the attack of cutworms, but to lie flat on the ground, fitting snugly around the stalk The eggs are laid by the fly on the stalk above the ground, and after hatching the grub must quickly get into the soil. The tar paper prevents this and the grubs die.

Grain Aphidae. — Happily, the Grain Aphid, that appeared in such numbers on oats in September, 1915, and was mentioned in my report of last year, caused no trouble this. Whether it was exterminated by natural enemies, lady-bird beetles, etc. or was out of its range and could not survive the exceptionally cold winter I cannot say. It can prove a dangerous pest, and its appearance was most unwelcome. It is to be hoped that we have seen the last of it.

Lepidoptera. — It has not been my practice to report long lists of captures of butterflies and moths, as the Alberta list is in capable hands and is being elsewhere recorded, but only such captures that deserve special recognition as new records of rarities.

Among these I might mention a new Alberta record taken by myself, 25th June, a large Hawk moth, *Sphinx drupiferarum*, and 10th August at Nordegg, a pair of the rare *Neoarctia beanii* (Bean's tiger moth). At Red Deer, 4th June. I took the large black swallowtail butterfly *Papilio bairdi* — a rare insect.

Another member of the society. Mr. K. Bowman, of Edmonton, had an exceptionally good day collecting butterflies, 15th July at Nordegg. He captured no less than twenty four different varieties, including such rarities as *Brenthis astarte*, *Papilio nitrami* *Papilio zolicaon*. The last two mentioned were rarely taken a number of years ago ;ii Blackfalds and elsewhere, but to the best of my knowledge, neither has been observed for a long time. Mr. Bowman's captures therefore amount to the re-discovery of these rare and beautiful insects — at least in this district.

Under a resolution of the society passed shortly after the last general I undertook to prepare a check list of the dragon-flies of this district, I shall this evening have pleasure in submitting this list, with brief memoranda concerning a number of the different varieties, and other information that I think would be of value to anyone desiring to devote leisure hours to the study of this interesting order of insects

Yours respectfully,
F. C. WHITEHOUSE