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### THE WORLD OF INSECTS

Reference Library Books  
Curtis Circulation Co.  
Philadelphia, 1971  
60c

From time to time this society has debated proposals to publish an elementary handbook on insects of the province for use in schools. Committees have even been struck to begin writing, but no manuscript has been forthcoming. Probably the members discovered that it is extraordinarily difficult to produce a regional guide to insects for young readers who are making a standing start. Some basic knowledge has to be assumed or provided. The two levels of information are not easy to combine into a small book and always there is the problem of illustration.

Now appears another rock-bottom elementary booklet, not slanted to this area admittedly, but at 60c priced below anything this society could hope for, well and interestingly written without gee-whiz superlatives, brilliantly illustrated in color to the Queen's taste, and factual enough for Chas. Darwin himself. It is one of a series of 12

(Birds, Fishes, The Earth, etc.). The cover blurb reads: "... Over 80 full-colored pictures. In dictionary form for quick, easy reference. All fundamentals and essential facts for a basic grasp of subject. An implement for educational advancement." All true.

The problem in writing such as this is one of choice: what to use from the mountains of available information, so that the beginner is not bored and turned off. Here the statements are so attractively illustrated as to lessen the importance of the examples chosen. Moreover, despite a faint British flavor, the examples are mostly so general that we have in this province similar forms or relatives close enough to recognize.

All the land arthropods are touched on, including three pages on spiders. There is a two-page index, an excellent family tree of 15 Orders of insects from Collembola up, and a table of 24 Orders organized by metamorphosis, with round numbers of species in each. One page is devoted to collecting methods.

The question remains: should we still try to produce a handbook for B.C. schools or rely on such books as this? The problem resolves itself into three parts: What information to present? How to illustrate it? Who should pay?

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