

## SCIENCE NOTES

*Orthezia occidentalis*, an *Ensign* coccid, in British Columbia (Homoptera: Ortheziidae). In the middle of October, 1945, Mr. Peterski, bus driver of Powell River, who lives a short distance out of that town, looked out one morning and saw what looked like a light fall of snow on two acres only of one of his fields which had been cleared but not cultivated. A light wind was blowing but the morning was not cold so Mr. Peterski went out to investigate. He found that the white covering consisted of moving particles, so he took some in to Dr. Boxall of Powell River Clinic. Being very interested in natural history, Dr. Boxall went out to the field and found that the alleged snow consisted of small, flat insects shaped like bedbugs which were covered all over with tiny, overlapping particles of white wax. By the time he got to the field, the insects had all disappeared under grass and moss and could be found only at ground level. He collected a number and sent them to me. I identified them tentatively as *Orthezia occidentalis* Douglas and forwarded them to the National Collection at Ottawa where a specialist confirmed my identification, adding that there is one record of it from Kaslo and one from Victoria, made by Mr. Downes. Professor "Essig in *College Entomology*" reports it from Alaska where it feeds on the roots of plants.

This snow-white species must have fed on the roots of grasses or plants at Powell River where it apparently

developed unseen until it increased enormously and crowded to the tops of low vegetation in such numbers as to whiten the field.

The *Orthezia* scales are almost entirely tropical species of which one, *Orthezia insignis* Douglas, has become a greenhouse pest which is widely distributed by commerce. So far, I have taken only one other native species, as yet unidentified, of which I collected an isolated colony on sagebrush at MacGillivray's, halfway between Lytton and Lillooet, in July, 1931.—G. J. Spencer, Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia.

**Further note on *Orthezia occidentalis***—By a curious coincidence the specimens recorded from Kaslo, B. C., were in the possession of the Editor when the above note by Professor Spencer was received. They were included in a small collection of Hemiptera made by the late A. W. Hanham, now the property of the Provincial Museum. There were also some specimens with a date, but no locality label, which were probably taken at Duncan. *Orthezia occidentalis* is a much commoner insect than is generally supposed but owing to its habit of living down among the crowns or clumps of grass it is seldom seen if not searched for. It is common in Victoria and probably occurs at many points on the east coast of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland.—W. Downes, Victoria, B. C.

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