

In Memoriam

TOM WILSON

It is with a feeling of deep regret that I put pen to paper to record the life-work of our late lamented colleague and friend, Mr. Tom Wilson, who met his death in a disastrous fire at the Coquihalla Hotel at Hope, B.C., on March 6th, 1917. On the other hand, it is with immense satisfaction that I can call attention to the wonderful influence his life and personality brought to bear on the work of our Entomological Society, as indeed upon the interests of all field naturalists. His intimate knowledge of our birds, mammals, plants and insects was nothing short of marvellous, and it was conceded by all who knew him that he represented the best type of field naturalist the Province has enjoyed for a great many years. He could discourse freely upon the habits of many native animals and insects—facts known to only a few but facts learnt by observation and experience—and he could bring his memory to bear onto the distribution of the majority of our native plants and trees. There were few parts of British Columbia where he had not been, after thirty years sojourn in the Province. While the habits of insects and animals attracted his regard to no small extent, it was really upon the mysteries of plant life, growth and ecology, that his mind really loved to dwell. A tramp through the woods, especially on Vancouver Island and on the Lower Mainland, was to his heart its greatest pleasure, and hours spent in his company on such occasions were hours of inspiration and delight.

He was born at Musselburgh, Scotland, on July 25th, 1856. In his early twenties he studied horticulture and forestry, and for a while was employed as foreman in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh. India then claimed his attention, to which country he went at the age of 24. Here he was engaged as Superintendent of some tea plantations in Lower India and Burmah. After six years spent in the tropics, he returned to his home in Scotland, only to set sail shortly afterwards for Canada. He was for a time employed on railway construction work on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Transcontinental Railway, and as he used to remark, "he walked into British Columbia before the railway was completed." From 1886 until the date of his death he remained in British Columbia—in very truth one of the pioneers of this great Province. In 1896 he was appointed Fruit Inspector in the Provincial Department of Agriculture. In 1900 he entered the service of the Dominion Government as Superintendent of Fumigation, and in 1906 the Inspectorship of Indian Orchards was added to his duties. The importance of the work necessary to develop Indian agriculture grad-



THE LATE MR. TOM WILSON,
Dominion Inspector of Indian Orchards
President, Entomological Society of British Columbia, 1912

ually increased until finally, in 1911, he was relieved of his work at the Fumigation Station in order that he might devote his whole energy to the improvement of Indian orchards and farms.

It was in pursuit of his duties as an officer of the Indian Department, loaned to the Entomological Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, that he met his untimely end on March 6th, 1917.

The most outstanding feature of his character was his absolute trust and loyalty to his colleagues and to his chiefs, and his obvious endeavour to do the very best he could in the work in which he was engaged. Friends throughout the Province learnt of his death with the greatest regret, realizing a sterling character had passed away as well as a perfect friend and companion.

R. C. TREHERNE, B.S.A.

