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WILLIAM ROBIN THOMPSON

Canadian entomologists owe a great debt of gratitude to our retiring editor, Dr. W. R. Thompson, for the effort, patience and ability he gave without stint to editing *The Canadian Entomologist* from 1947 to 1958. When he assumed the editorship, the journal was in a sadly debilitated condition, but, to a large extent singlehandedly, he revived and re-invigorated it and it went on from strength to strength, gaining in size, and still much more important, in quality, owing to his insistence on a high standard. Dr. Thompson's initiative and his ambition to enhance the value of the journal as an outlet for scientific papers led to a very important new departure: a cooperative arrangement with government services whereby certain monographic works by government scientists are published as supplements to *The Canadian Entomologist*.

William Robin Thompson was born in London, Ontario, in 1887. He was fortunate in his birth place as in his youth the Entomological Society of Ontario maintained its headquarters in London: a pleasant meeting room housing the library and the collection of the Society. Among the local naturalists who foregathered in the room and took part in the activities of the Society were distinguished personalities such as Drs. Wm. Saunders, John Deerness, and C. J. S. Bethune; and neophytes such as W. R. Thompson and his two friends A. C. and A. W. Baker who later became well-known entomologists. Those three young Londoners had the priceless privileges and experience of being closely associated with and of being introduced to entomology by some of our most outstanding amateur and pioneering entomologists.

Dr. Thompson graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College in 1909 with a B.S.A. degree in biology. He obtained an M.Sc. in entomology at Cornell University in 1912, a D.Sc. in zoology and general embryology at the University of Paris in 1921, and a Ph.D. in philosophy at St. Maximin College, France, in 1924. He joined the U.S. Bureau of Entomology in 1909, and was posted to the historic Gypsy Moth Parasite Laboratory at Melrose Highlands, Mass., one of the earliest centres for parasite introduction in North America and the training ground of most of the early North American workers in biological control of insects. Later he was sent to Europe to study the natural enemies of the gypsy and brown-tail moths and in due course became director of the U.S. parasite laboratories at Auch and Hyères in the south of France from 1919 to 1928. During World War I he was a demonstrator in the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University and later on a bacteriologist with the Royal Navy. In 1928 he was appointed Superintendent of the Farnham House Laboratory of the Imperial Institute of Entomology, and he remained at the head of this organization while it underwent its transformations from Imperial Parasite Service to Imperial Bureau of Biological Control and finally, when the word Imperial was no longer respectable, to the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control. In 1940 the headquarters of the Institute was transferred to Belleville, Ontario, and in 1948 to Ottawa.

Dr. Thompson, a very prolific writer, published some 150 scientific papers and also many contributions to popular magazines. He is recognized internationally

as an authority on biological control and population dynamics and has made no mean contribution to the systematics of the Tachinidae.

His scientific achievements have been recognized by many honours, including election to the Royal Society, 1933, and the Royal Society of Canada, 1949; Honorary Fellowships in the Royal Entomological Society of London, 1954, and in the Royal Irish Academy, 1958, and Honorary Membership in the Entomological Society of Canada, 1958.

He had, and indeed still has, a remarkable capacity for work of a high order. When I was closely associated with him in the earlier and more difficult days of his editorship, I used to marvel at his gift of being able to do so many different things effectively and at the same time with dispatch.

W. A. Ross

Book Review

A REVISIONAL STUDY OF THE BEES OF THE GENUS *PERDITA* F. SMITH, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FAUNA OF THE PACIFIC COAST (HYMENOPTERA, APOIDEA). Part III, by P. H. Timberlake. 118 pp. 13 plates. Univ. Calif. Pubs. Ent. 14, 1958.

The two earlier parts of this revision appeared in volumes 7 and 9 of the above journal. The phrase 'Pacific' in the title is misleading unless one is aware that the genus is restricted to North and Central America. While most numerous in the Far West, the genus extends to the Atlantic coast, and from Canada to at least Guatemala. In Parts I and II a key to the subgenera is followed by discussions, keys and descriptions, exclusive of the typical subgenus.

In part III the remaining species are placed *en bloc* in this subgenus, which consists of numerous groups. Of these only *zonalis* and *halictoides*, apparently new, are defined or discussed. Keys are given for the two groups, which together consist of forty-seven species and sixteen subspecies, thirty-five species and ten subspecies being described as new. The descriptions are enhanced by numerous line drawings. No new synonym was noted on the specific or subspecific level. *Zaperdita* Ckll., *Geoperdita* Ckll. and Porter, and *Tetraperdita* Ckll. and Porter are sunk as synonyms of *Perdita* (*Perdita*); unfortunately, this is concealed in the text rather than displayed in the bibliography under the subgeneric name. In a supplement to parts I and II fifteen new species and two new subspecies are recognised on other subgenera, together with notes on other species and on previous keys. The concluding part or parts of this comprehensive revision of *Perdita* will complete a very welcome addition to the nearctic literature in the Apoidea.

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