

## EDITORIAL SECTION

## AN ANNIVERSARY RE-APPRAISAL

With the March, 1945, number, MOSQUITO NEWS will mark the anniversary of its extension in geographic scope through its affiliation one year ago with the newly launched American Mosquito Control Association. At such a time it is fitting that we should pause briefly to re-examine our perspective with reference to our background, and to the general objectives, the responsibilities, and the major services that are appropriate functions of the Association and its official journal, MOSQUITO NEWS.

With a few exceptions, the females of all mosquito species feed upon the blood of birds and mammals, including man. Such mosquitoes are "pest" mosquitoes.

In the course of this intimate relation of the mosquito and its source of blood meals, some pest mosquitoes have become carriers of a third factor in the associated group of organisms, of which the parasites of malaria and of filariasis, and the virus bodies of yellow fever, dengue, and encephalitis are examples.

The resulting man-to-mosquito-to-man cycle of the corresponding diseases may be effectually broken by elimination of the mosquito vector.

The effectual suppression of pest mosquitoes in a locality would automatically

suppress all of the associated mosquito borne diseases.

Sometimes, however, the mosquito carriers of a particular mosquito borne disease may be effectually suppressed by special control measures at lower cost than would be required for the suppression of all of the associated pest mosquitoes. Frequently such partial measures based upon special knowledge of mosquito habits may be justifiable as economically sufficient, or all that is economically practicable.

In the early years, work with mosquitoes as possible carriers of disease fell logically to medical men. Fifty years ago there were few professional entomologists; and most of the earlier work with insects had been carried on as a hobby by doctors, lawyers, clergymen, bankers, and the like. Control work when ultimately called for fell logically to the engineer.

As a result there has grown up a tradition among mosquito control workers that mosquito control work is the province of the medical man and the engineer; with the entomologist (thought of as the traditional "butterfly chaser") expected to contribute little except to "count the spots on mosquitoes' wings."

On the contrary, however, within the past two score years the "practical" pro-

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The schedule of this course reproduced (See also MOSQUITO NEWS for December, 1944) and Mr. Gray's comment taken from a letter to the editor and printed here, may be suggestive and helpful to officers of institutions in other regional areas that may contemplate offering a similar course.

"We have just completed an intensive two weeks' course on the control of mosquitoes and mosquito transmitted diseases, sponsored by the School of Public Health of the University of California. For your information, I am enclosing a schedule of the course."

"Twenty-four men were enrolled, most of them coming from mosquito abatement districts in California, plus men from federal, state and local health departments, with one man from Washington State and another from Utah State."

"Our experience with this intensive course indicates that if another should ever be given it should be expanded to at least a month, one or two days allotted to field demonstrations and an appreciable amount of time left free for study. However, we did the best we could under war conditions."

(Signed) HAROLD F. GRAY.

fession of economic entomology has grown to huge proportions; such that the American Association of Economic Entomologists now has a membership of approximately 1800, largely in public service.

Many of these "practical" entomologists have concerned themselves with the habits and behavior of mosquitoes and with the critical relations of these insects to their environment, as well as with their classification. As a result, control of mosquito borne diseases has become much more precisely specialized; and to assure efficient work, medical men, engineers, investigators, and public officials concerned with their control must themselves become competent entomologists within this special field, or must enlist the collaboration of the trained entomologist.

Not only has the control of mosquitoes and mosquito born diseases become more specifically exacting, but mosquito control workers are coming more and more to be charged with control of other insect borne diseases. For example, where flea borne plague is endemic, as in Hawaii, the rat and mosquito squads may properly give more attention to rat control and rat proofing than to mosquito control; control of tick borne spotted fever will almost certainly be added to the duties of mosquito abatement commissions in many areas; and where other insect borne diseases may be effectually suppressed by control of their insect vectors, the mosquito control worker may be required also to assume responsibility for this.

Furthermore, our knowledge of insect

borne diseases and their control is continuing to advance with rapidly increasing velocity as a result of investigations variously shared by practical control workers, medical men, entomologists, and laboratory technicians. Results of these investigations reported and interpreted to the field worker may point the way to advantageous readjustments of control techniques; and, in turn, developments in the field brought to the attention of the laboratory worker may help to direct his efforts and accelerate his progress.

The American Mosquito Control Association and MOSQUITO NEWS constitute a dual agency which may have an important part in passing on from each group to the others, appropriate results produced by the work of the medical man, the entomologist, the engineer, and the laboratory investigator; and thus in helping to coordinate their activities and to bring their respective technical contributions into earlier effective use.

Owing to his increasingly diverse responsibilities in different areas, it would seem also that adequate service to the mosquito control worker himself and to the public health official, as well as to those who participate less directly in this field and to the public, would require of the Association and MOSQUITO NEWS coverage of the general field of medical entomology, of which mosquitoes and the diseases they carry have long constituted the major part.

The editor and the publications committee will welcome comments and suggestions on this point.