

Department of Agriculture,
Entomological Branch

OTTAWA, May 3, 1929.

Dr. C. F. Martin,
Acting Principal,
McGill University,
Montreal, Que.

Dear Doctor Martin:

I am taking the liberty of writing you on a matter which seems to me of very great importance and in which MacDonal College appears now to be in a position to render effective service.

There is, at the present time in this country, a disquieting lack of young men properly trained for entomological investigation. There are few schools in Canada giving a proper undergraduate training in entomology and very few students in their laboratories specializing in that subject.

We have, in the Dominion Entomological Branch, a staff of about 60 undergraduates, many of them with higher degrees, engaged for the most part in the investigation of economic problems in entomology, some of them of the greatest national importance, and a smaller number concerned, chiefly or wholly, with taxonomic or morphologic studies. Each year, we have a few vacancies and a few new positions to fill. We see little hope of obtaining suitable applicants from the universities in this country during the next few years.

There will apparently be few graduates in entomology of any sort in the near future, and we are not very optimistic about the quality of that few. Those who have come to us recently from agricultural colleges in this country, where the entomological training is usually given, have been, in too many cases, poorly grounded in the sciences and of little use to us for investigational work until they received further training.

If our colleges are to serve the needs of this country in training men for entomological investigation and research, it appears to me essential that the standard for the course they receive shall be kept just as high as that for any other science.

We need men for the future with a broad and thorough training in the sciences, a moderate specialization in entomology in their last two years, a subsequent further training in entomology and an introduction to research methods through postgraduate courses. For our higher positions, such as entomologist, we should be able to require three years of postgraduate study in addition to professional experience.

During the last few years, we have been encouraging promising young men with their first degree to go to various universities in the United States to obtain graduate training in entomology; and they have rarely come back. There are ten there now. It is quite time that we had thoroughly good undergraduate training in entomology available in this country, supplemented by postgraduate courses leading to the doctor's and master's degrees.

I feel that MacDonal College has, in Dr. Brittain and Dr. Du Porte and their two assistants, the nucleus of a competent entomological staff, and I am sure that my colleagues here join me in expressing the hope that they will be given the assistance, support and encouragement they need to enable them to develop a thoroughly efficient school in entomology and parasitology, with a high standard of scholarship.

I have written this to you because we, in this organization, feel so keenly the need of a first-class training school in entomology in this country, and knowing Brittain and Du Porte well-- I taught them both at MacDonal -- I am confident that they have the ability and the scholarship to turn out the men we shall need.