

ence of a hatching Black Duck, the eggs of which had probably been laid for about three weeks. Down from the bird's breast was used to line the finely-constructed nest.

To those interested in the nesting of the Common Tern, I would refer them to an article in *Bird-Lore* for August, 1904, where the colonies on the Hen

and Chicken group of islands were studied, and to the *Wilson Bulletin* for March, 1916, where a colony off the coast of Massachusetts was studied. Photographs are supplied in both articles and it is interesting to note that in the ocean colony the nesting material is totally different from and more abundant than that employed in Lake Erie.

#### OBITUARY

#### JOHN MACOUN, 1831-1920.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND NATURALIST TO THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA.

Prof. John Macoun, one of the oldest members of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, died at Sidney, Vancouver Island, B.C., on July 18, 1920, in his 90th year. He was born at Maralin, Ireland, about twenty miles from Belfast, on April 17, 1831. Like many other families in Ireland, after the great depression through famine and rebellion between 1840 and 1850, his family emigrated to Canada in the latter year, and settled in Seymour Township, Northumberland County, Ontario. At that time much of this part of Ontario was heavily wooded, and John Macoun and his brothers, Frederick and James, with their mother, began to clear a farm. Profits were slow in coming, and in order to relieve the situation, John, who felt that his calling was in a different field, began to teach school, as many another bright young man has done in Canada. Teachers were much needed in the country, and soon he had charge of a small rural school. He felt, however, that to succeed as he desired, more knowledge was necessary, so he took a course in the Normal School in Toronto in 1859. Later he was in charge of one of the smaller schools in Belleville, then became head of the public schools there.

All this time his love of nature had led him to study her many forms, but in botany he took particular delight, and by 1874 he had made such a name for himself in this study, that he was appointed Professor of Botany and Geology in Albert College, Belleville, a position he filled with great ability and success until 1881, when, having been appointed Botanist to the Dominion Government, he severed his connection with the college to devote all his time to public service, although since 1872 he had been employed part of the time by the Dominion Government.

In 1872, Mr. Macoun was invited by the late Sir Sanford Fleming to be the botanist of a party on an expedition through the West to explore and to determine the line for the first transcontinental rail-

way, now known as the Canadian Pacific. Associated with the party was the late Principal Grant of Queen's University, who in his book "Ocean to Ocean" gave a description of the trip and the part John Macoun played in it.

In 1875, Mr. Macoun was appointed botanist to an expedition under the leadership of the late Dr. Alfred Selwyn, then Director of the Geological Survey, and assisted in exploring the Peace River and the Rocky Mountains; and in 1877 he was asked to write a report on the country he had visited, and it was this report which brought Mr. Macoun prominently before the public, for in it he was most enthusiastic over the possibilities of the West, claiming that there were immense areas suitable for wheat culture, and for settlement.

He again explored the prairies in 1879, 1880 and 1881, and in 1882 published his very valuable work "Manitoba and the Great North-West," an octavo volume of 687 pages, and still the most complete book on the West which has been published. This was a private enterprise, but the information contained in that book did much to open the eyes of Canadians and the people of other countries to the vast possibilities of the Canadian North-West. On page 213 he wrote: "Much might be written about the future, and calculations made regarding the wheat production of years to come, but such speculations are needless. In a very few years the crop will be limited by the means of export, and just as the carrying capacity of the roads increase, so will the crop."

In 1877, he was invited to write a report on the whole of the western country for the information of the Minister of Public Works in connection with the new railway, and was cautioned not to draw on his imagination. "In response to this I wrote as much truth about the country as I dared," he states in another part of his book, "for I saw that even yet my best friends believed me rather wild on