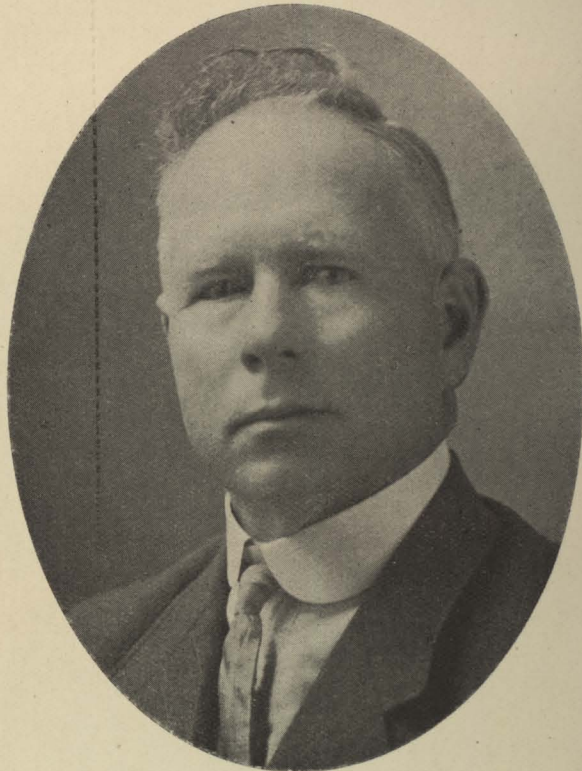


**OBITUARY NOTICES.****Mr Alfred Philpott, F.E.S.**

MR ALFRED PHILPOTT, F.E.S., whose death occurred in Auckland on July 24 last, was one of the best known entomologists in New Zealand. Born in Invercargill in 1871, he early showed a keen interest in natural history, and more particularly in insects. During the earlier part of his life he was engaged in commercial pursuits, but found time to make a fine collection of all kinds of New Zealand insects, though he was chiefly interested in the Order Lepidoptera. He was also for some years Curator of the Southland Museum.



MR ALFRED PHILPOTT, F.E.S.

During my first visit to New Zealand, in 1919, I made the personal acquaintance of Mr Philpott, with whom I had corresponded for some years previously. We spent some days together at Queenstown and climbed Ben Lomond, and I realised at once that my new acquaintance was a born entomologist and a keen lover of nature. Later, when I was invited to take the post of Chief of the Biological Department of the newly-formed Cawthron Institute, at Nelson, I selected Philpott as the ideal man to fill the post of Assistant Entomo-

logist, and strongly recommended him for that post. He accepted the offer of the Cawthron Trustees, and started work in Nelson while I was away travelling in America and Europe. On my return in December, 1920, I found him hard at work laying the foundations of the fine collections there, and generally helping to build up the new Department. Though he was naturally not interested in economic problems as such, but only in pure science, he threw himself heartily into all the new lines of economic entomology which were then being started. I think one of the greatest claims he has on the affectionate remembrance of New Zealanders lies in the extraordinarily careful and painstaking way in which he carried out the difficult details of the work of acclimatising *Aphelinus mali*, the parasite of Woolly Aphis, which I had introduced from America. There was a time, in September, 1921, when, but for Philpott's unremitting care, this first brood of *Aphelinus*, reduced by the severe winter to only about three pairs, would otherwise have entirely perished, thus entailing the cost and trouble of introducing a fresh strain, with all its attendant delays and uncertainties. But he succeeded in bringing the remnant safely through, and the millions of these parasites which now aid in controlling the woolly aphis throughout New Zealand and Australia are all the progeny of the very few that he saved in those anxious days.

As long as he continued in his post of Assistant Entomologist, Philpott carried out all his duties with the most unflinching regularity and care. I can truthfully say that I have never known a more reliable worker. But his heart was always in pure science; and when, in 1923, his private fortune enabled him to become independent, he asked permission to be allowed to continue work on his favourite Order Lepidoptera, without official salary. His resignation from the post of Assistant Entomologist was accepted by the Trustees with regret, and he was appointed Honorary Lepidopterist. This post he held until June, 1929, when the occurrence of the great earthquake in Nelson Province was the immediate occasion of his removal to Auckland and of the severance of his connection with the Cawthron Institute. During the six years in which he was Honorary Lepidopterist, he built up an extremely fine collection of New Zealand Lepidoptera, basing it on his own original collection, which he most generously presented to the Cawthron Institute. He also worked away so strenuously at the systematics and morphology of New Zealand Lepidoptera, that he published a long series of valuable papers, in which a considerable number of new species were described, various obscure organs were detected and discussed, and the difficult problem of the evolution of the genitalia in various groups was worked out with great thoroughness. This work brought him into contact with other workers all over the world, so that, at the time of his death, he had gained a reputation second to none in New Zealand for reliable and painstaking work in pure entomology.

On leaving Nelson he became Honorary Entomologist to the Auckland Museum, a post which he held at the time of his death.

Philpott published in all no less than seventy-three scientific papers, chiefly on the Lepidoptera, but some on other Orders of Insects and one or two on Birds.

Besides being a fine entomologist, Philpott was a writer of rare literary style, being in the direct succession of the famous essayists and a true disciple of "Elia." For many years he wrote regularly the leading article in the Saturday "Nelson Evening Mail." These articles, mostly dealing with literary subjects, were looked forward to by a wide circle of readers and were highly appreciated by the more discerning. I have often thought that they might have an even wider appeal if collected together and published in one volume.

Other useful activities carried on by Philpott during his life in Nelson were connected with the Literary Institute and Philosophical Society; he served for years on the Committee of the former and as Secretary of the latter. He was also a keen and ardent bushman and explorer, and had traversed little-known regions both in Southland and Nelson Provinces.

Philpott's outstanding characteristics were his imperturbable good nature and his generosity of thought and action. Though he was a convinced rationalist and basically opposed to all organised religion, he set an example of high moral conduct which I have seldom known equalled. In a letter written to me only a month before he died, when he had hopes of an ultimate recovery, he spoke of his ardent desire to continue for ten more years working at his beloved subject, so that he might leave the systematics of the Lepidoptera "on a sound and structural basis." This hope, alas, was not destined to be fulfilled, but it may stand as a monument to the high ideals which informed all his actions, and as a clear indication of his firm belief that man's whole duty was to build well some small portion of the great Temple of Knowledge, which might for ever serve to aid humanity in its onward progressive march.

Canberra, Australia,

R. J. TILLYARD.

---

### **Joseph Crosby-Smith, 1853-1930.**

CROSBY-SMITH was one of that honourable band of self-educated naturalists which has played a distinguished part in investigating the natural history of the British Empire. He was born at Keighley, Yorkshire, on July 18, 1853. At the age of nine—but only during part of the day—he was employed at the Dean Clough carpet mill. One of the partners, Mr Edward Crowley, had a private observatory which the boy was encouraged to visit, and there, under the stimulus of the astronomical observer, his latent taste for natural science seems to have been awakened.

At the age of twenty-three, accompanied by his wife, he emigrated to New Zealand, and settled down in Dunedin, where for 25 years he was employed as bookkeeper at the foundry of H. E. Shacklock. In 1879, Crosby-Smith became teacher of shorthand at the newly-