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## EDWARD ERNEST PRINCE 1858 - 1936<sup>1</sup>

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THE "GENIAL PROFESSOR PRINCE", as he was everywhere termed, was a striking official figure in Ottawa as Commissioner of Fisheries from his arrival from Scotland in 1893 to his retirement in 1924, a period of thirty-one years. He was generally known throughout the whole of Canada, from having made many official trips to the various districts with important fisheries, as well as from having served as chairman on various fishery commissions, which held sittings for the taking of evidence in very many places. He was a great favourite everywhere. The wide extent and great variety of his activities can best be appreciated from Dr. Duncan Campbell Scott's "skeleton record" of his life in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada for 1937.

As a schoolboy, he was already a naturalist. It is said that, when only fifteen years old, he won with a paper on the newt a prize offered by the Philosophical and Literary Society of Leeds, England, where he was born. To make himself look older when he had to present it to such a learned audience, he purchased and wore a pair of plain glass spectacles!

He was so bent on scientific knowledge that, eschewing his father's business, he managed, through bursaries, to take the undergraduate course at St. Andrew's University, Scotland, from 1880 to 1884, with later experience at Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities. In 1885 he became Naturalist at the small St. Andrew's Marine Laboratory, which had been recently started under an arrangement with the Fishery Board for Scotland. There he was initiated by Prof. W. C. M'Intosh into the wonders of discovering to what kinds of fishes the various eggs found floating in the sea or attached to the bottom belonged

and how they developed. He began publishing his discoveries, briefly at the Aberdeen meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1885 and in fuller form in the Annals of Natural History, but the most thorough account was in a lengthy paper with M'Intosh in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He was made a Fellow of the Linnaean Society in 1888.

His flair for clear and attractive presentation of scientific matters resulted in an article on "St. Andrew's Marine Laboratory — an hour in a scientific laboratory on the Scottish coast" in McMillan's English Illustrated Magazine in 1889, with illustrations signed by a staff artist, Holland Tringham, but really the work of the sister of the young lady who became Mrs. Prince in 1894. Popular articles of his on marine animals appeared in Longman's Magazine and in the National Observer from 1890 to 1892.

In 1890 he was appointed Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy in the Faculty of Medicine of the recently incorporated St. Mungo's College at Glasgow. There he became active in the local Natural History Society, reading short papers, exhibiting interesting specimens, and becoming a Vice-President. He also took an interest in the Andersonian Naturalist's Society of Anderson's College and became its President. At the same time, he had been having experience with fisheries problems, not only in Scotland, but under the Northern Fishery Council in England, and on the west coast of Ireland in government employ.

In 1892, the Canadian fisheries service was reorganized, with abolition of the Deputy-Ministership and combination of Fisheries with Marine under a common Deputy-Minister. Canada decided to get a fishery scientist and at that time, as Michael Graham states ("The Fish Gate", 1943), M'Intosh of St.

1. —The photograph of Professor Prince is published through the courtesy of Science Service, Washington, D.C.



Andrews "was the most prominent fishery scientist" and was developing fishery investigations of outstanding character in connection with the recently formed Fishery Board for Scotland. His laboratory "turned out a series of remarkable scientists, who obtained responsible positions all over the world" (Graham), and one of these, Professor Prince, was selected to be scientific adviser to Canada's fishery service with the titles of Commissioner and General Inspector of Fisheries.

That in his new position he retained the title of Professor was the visible evidence that he considered himself to be the expositor of the academic and scientific point of view in its application to the fisheries. Nevertheless, he was drawn into purely administrative office work in addition to the duties of chairman for various Commissions. The latter made the situation so acute that it was rectified in 1909 by reorganization of the service, which permitted him to devote his full time to the scientific side, including the work of the investigating Commissions. The latter dealt with the fisheries of particular regions or for particular species, such as the lobster and the shad. He for Canada and Starr Jordan for the United States formed under the treaty of 1907 the International Fisheries Commission, which had the duty of investigating and framing regulations for the fisheries of all the waters contiguous to the international boundary.

As shown by his appointment, those in authority were ready for scientific study of the fisheries. Faced with Canada's enormous fishery problems, and with duties permitting him but little time for detailed personal investigation, he at once advocated with enthusiasm, in an official report, "A marine scientific station for Canada", in order to develop a seaside laboratory like the one with which he had been associated in Scotland. Canadian scientists were already eager for such a thing, which came into being in 1899 at St. Andrews, New Brunswick. He was its Director, and also Chairman of the Board of Management. From the latter developed the Biological Board of Canada, with Pacific and Great Lakes stations as well as the original Atlantic one. He continued to take a prominent part in its activities as Chairman until 1921 and as Secretary until his retirement.

From the start of his work, he exercised his skill in word picturization in articles connecting science with fisheries. The annual

fishery "blue book" contained a new series of "Special Appended Reports" from his pen, of which there were thirty-nine from the report for 1893 to that for 1908. He was naturally the editor of the marine station's publication "Contributions to Canadian Biology", the first issue of which appeared as a "blue book" in 1901. He wrote a preface to each issue, which frequently contained a separate summary for each paper to place it in its proper setting. He even wrote an eight page article for the second issue as "An abbreviated popular résumé.....divested as far as possible of technical phraseology" of "laborious researches" of his colleague, Professor Macallum, "on the inorganic composition of certain marine jelly-fishes or medusae", fundamental results for which the latter is still universally quoted.

In 1894, he became a member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, was at once given committee work, was President from 1897 to 1899, and Associate editor from 1899 to 1912. As showing his wide outdoor knowledge and interest, he was Leader in Zoology from 1901 to 1914. In 1927, he resumed activity in the Club as a member of Council. In its publication, the Ottawa Naturalist, twenty-nine articles by him appeared from 1895 to 1916, the first on "Colourless blood in animals" and the last on "Sea Squirts".

Professor Prince was in much demand as a lecturer from one coast of Canada to the other. He delivered the Popular Lecture at the Ottawa meeting of the Royal Society in 1895. He was also chosen to give the Sir John Murray Memorial Lecture on marine scientific research to the Society at its meeting in May, 1919.

In marked contrast to his colleagues on the Biological Board, Dr. Macallum and Dr. Knight, he avoided controversy, and preferred to conduct business through social amenities rather than by pressing issues. He was a most delightful companion, as I found on many an occasion, whether on a lengthy trip, as when he introduced me to a meeting of the American Fisheries Society at Boston in 1913, or at the Atlantic Biological Station at the close of a summer season. To a wonderful degree, he retained his boyish ardour. In returning in 1915 from his antipodean trip to study and report on the New Zealand fisheries for its government, he brought back on the long voyage to Canada living specimens of the interesting forerunner of the insects, *Peripatus*, to show to his



associates, although unfortunately none survived till he could show them to the naturalists at Ottawa.

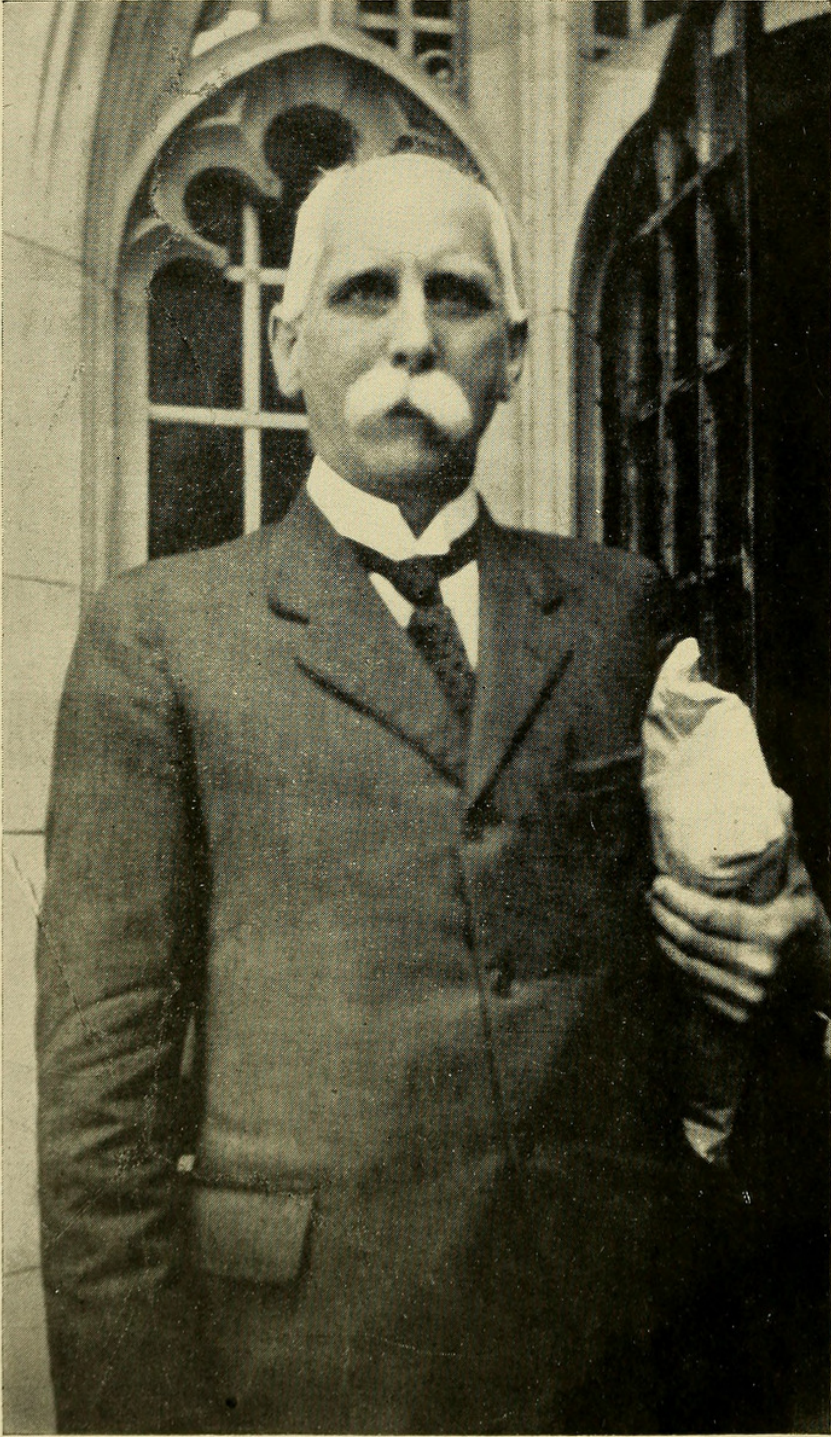
At St. Andrews in the Twenties he discovered that salamanders (*Spelerpes*) were living in a brook near the Biological Station and from him the latter became *Spelerpes* brook to my children from that day forth.

He liked to joke. In the Station museum, was part of a skeleton, picked up on the sea beach, on which his opinion was asked. He tried to make it the cranium of a cetacean, and we had to explain that it was the pelvis of a cow. He had his revenge by presenting to the museum a specimen of a new fish nicely preserved in a tall glass jar, suspended by the head from the eyelet of the lid, and labelled *Cornu bovis*. How many visitors to the museum were impressed by this wonderful creature from the ocean depths as it seemed to be, I do not know, but close inspection, even without knowledge of what the Latin name really means, revealed that it was a cow's horn, with paper "fins", with discs of felt for eyes, and with whelk's eggs for teeth!

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Edward Ernest Prince

1858 - 1936



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