

## A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE F. LEDINGHAM

Upon returning the galley proofs for December's issue to the printer, George Ledingham retired as editor of the *Blue Jay*, after 16 of the journal's 30 years.

Sixty-four issues of this quarterly, what a tremendous amount of work! Yet George gave very full measure, seeing the printer, assisting someone with his first article, writing items himself, proof-reading, searching records for interesting editor's footnotes, interviewing people, and on and on. In addition to all this he wrote the editorials. He set a tough standard, and in his quiet persistent way encouraged others to meet it. More than a hobby, the *Blue Jay* was to him an avocation. George truly believes the *Blue Jay* is a positive force in the natural history field on the prairies, playing a role in developing a conservation conscience.

Over the years several members have helped with the *Blue Jay* in various ways — as assistant editors, writing assistants and at other chores. Like George, they are knowledgeable, capable and high-principled, and have their own views. Through their personal interest and with the influence of his purpose and dedication, they together sustained the journal's reputation.

As if all this work was not enough, his concern about conservation drew him into other Society activities. Frequently a member on committees and delegations pressing for nature preservation, he also participated in public hearings on parks and workshops on the environment. I am glad to note he is continuing to make a contribution.

A professor of biology at Regina Campus, Dr. Ledingham is a botanist, as many readers know. From the way he speaks, you realize he is happiest when on a field trip with a class of young people. Having talked with some of his students, I sensed that he has the rare ability to make them aware, not just of the plants, but of the whole, living plant community; he generates in them an understanding, a feel for the prairies he loves. At the Society's summer meet each June, you will invariably find him, in a group, two or three of whom will be on their knees looking at something, and the talk will be plants.

All these things came together in his editorials. For example, about his students, "As I heard their expressions of surprise when they saw a new sight, I often thought how much people miss when they do not take the trouble to look with an eye that really sees."

George was usually ahead of us, expressing concern for the environment, pointing to conservation problems. His first editorial, in 1956, mentioned the need for protection of hawks and owls in Saskatchewan — year-round protection finally became fact in 1971. In 1959, referring to DDT and 2,4-D he wrote, "As each new spray has come on the market people hurry to take advantage of its obvious benefits without giving due consideration to possible harmful effects" — substantial reversal of this situation came 11 years later. In 1961 an editorial asked, "Could we have a wildlife stamp, with proceeds to go only to the purchase of lands for wildlife, issued each year?" In 1969, Saskatchewan introduced provincial hunting licenses with receipts for wildlife habitat.

Under him the *Blue Jay* continued to inform us on a variety of natural history subjects, to be an organ where members advised others of interesting and unusual events in nature and to provide a useful reference for local records. The journal was this and more. Again turn to his very first issue for his editor's creed — today still his wish for the *Blue Jay* — "In a democracy, we cannot expect to have the problems of conservation and wildlife management solved intelligently without an informed public, and I therefore hope that the *Blue Jay* will be able to play a really effective role in conservation education."

He has our gratitude. Thank heavens there are George Ledinghams in this world.

J. A. WEDGWOOD