

Thomas Lyttleton Lyon

February 17, 1869 — October 7, 1938

The death of Emeritus Professor Thomas Lyttleton Lyon at his home in Ithaca on October 7, 1938, removed from the Faculty of Cornell University one of its most eminent and highly regarded members. In his field of soil science he is known the world over, and his textbooks are used in most American institutions where instruction in pedology and edaphology is offered. His work on the various phases of the nitrogen cycle, his lysimeter studies and his cereal investigations are internationally noteworthy. His published scientific articles and bulletins are many. His career was long, busy, and crowded with successes.

He was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, on February 17, 1869, was prepared for college at the Pittsburgh High School, and graduated from Cornell University in 1891. Later he studied with Professor Tollens at the University of Göttingen and with Professor Caldwell at Cornell. He received his Ph.D. degree from Cornell in 1904.

In 1891 young Lyon accepted an instructorship in Chemistry at the University of Nebraska. Here he served until 1906, having been promoted to a professorship in Agriculture. From 1899 to that date he was also assistant director of the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station. While in Nebraska he was married to Bertha L. Clark of Lincoln. Two sons added much to the happiness of his married life.

In 1906 he was called to Cornell University by Dean Bailey to become professor of Experimental Agronomy and in 1912 was made head of the department of Soil Technology, now the department of Agronomy. As head of this department he served the State of New York and Cornell University wisely and well until his retirement on July 1, 1937.

Although Dr. Lyon made several notable scientific contributions while at the University of Nebraska, his most valuable work was done at Cornell. Caldwell Field, named in memory of his former teacher, Professor George Chapman Caldwell, was the site of his lysimeter and plat experimentations and other field studies. Caldwell Field and the chemical laboratories in Caldwell Hall were for years a mecca for persons interested in soil science from all over the world.

Because of his amiable disposition and broad cultural background Dr. Lyon had many loyal friends. As a companion he was genial and delightfully conversant with almost any subject that might be broached. Many still

remember him in his more vigorous days before ill health began to curtail his social activities. His considerate companionship, his quiet, dignified efficiency, his high ideals and the soundness of his scientific research mark a man whom it was good to know.