

## Annual Congress and Field Excursion of the R.A.O.U.

FOR the first time, the annual congress and field excursion of the R.A.O.U. were held in Western Australia. The Transcontinental Railway having been completed and obligations to Queensland discharged, the Union seized the first opportunity of meeting in the distant "Golden West."

The large party started in the person of the president-elect, Mr. C. A. Barnard, from the north-east of the continent on the 4,000-mile rail journey to Perth and Busselton, where the rail was left for the field to be explored ornithologically near the south-west extremity. Mr. E. H. Barker, of Brisbane, completed the Queensland delegation; Messrs. A. S. Le Souëf, G. Goldsmith, and J. F. Thomas represented New South Wales; and Miss Macdonald, Tasmania. These made the party leaving Melbourne on Friday, 15th October, up to 21, and 10 others joined in South Australia.

As magnificent rains had fallen since the end of July, all were looking forward to their trip across the great "desert." However, little desert was seen. The country looked well, and wherever cattle or sheep were observed they were in forward condition.

A keen look-out was kept for birds along the Transcontinental Railway, and at every stopping-place in daylight parties hurriedly left the train to gather some of the beautiful wild-flowers and to make a chance observation of the animal life.

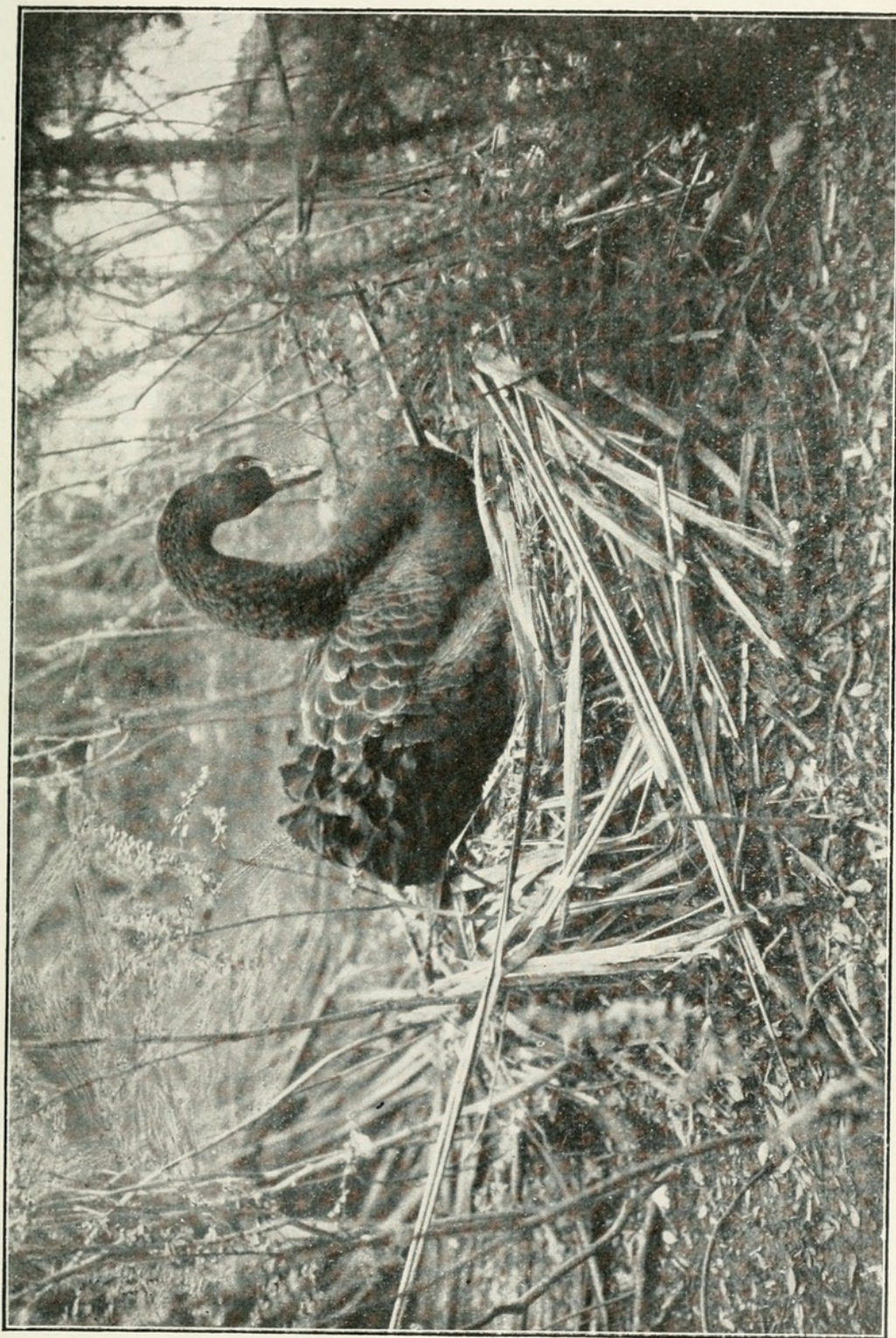
The train being luxuriously fitted and excellently managed, the weather cool and dust little in evidence, the journey was a pleasure to all. The various committees, notably the Check-list committee, kept steadily at work, and time passed rapidly and pleasantly.

Kalgoorlie, with its wide, tar-paved streets and electric trams, was reached according to time-table. Full use was made by botanists, entomologists, ornithologists, and photographers of the stay of some hours. Perth was reached in time for breakfast on Tuesday, 19th October. The party was welcomed by the acting State secretary, Major E. A. Le Souëf, who had stepped into the breach and performed well the difficult task of gathering up the threads when, at short notice, Mr. W. B. Alexander, State secretary of the R.A.O.U. for Western Australia, absent on a visit to England, was commandeered for scientific research in America. The morning was occupied in settling preliminaries and in paying official calls.

At 2 o'clock the congress began at the Western Australian Museum, Perth, where a meeting-room was kindly placed at our disposal by the trustees, for whom Mr. Battye welcomed the delegates. Representatives of all the States were present. Dr. J. A. Leach occupied the chair.

Economy dictates a summarized report. The annual report, indicating a busy and prosperous year of varied activities, was





The Black Swan on Nest.

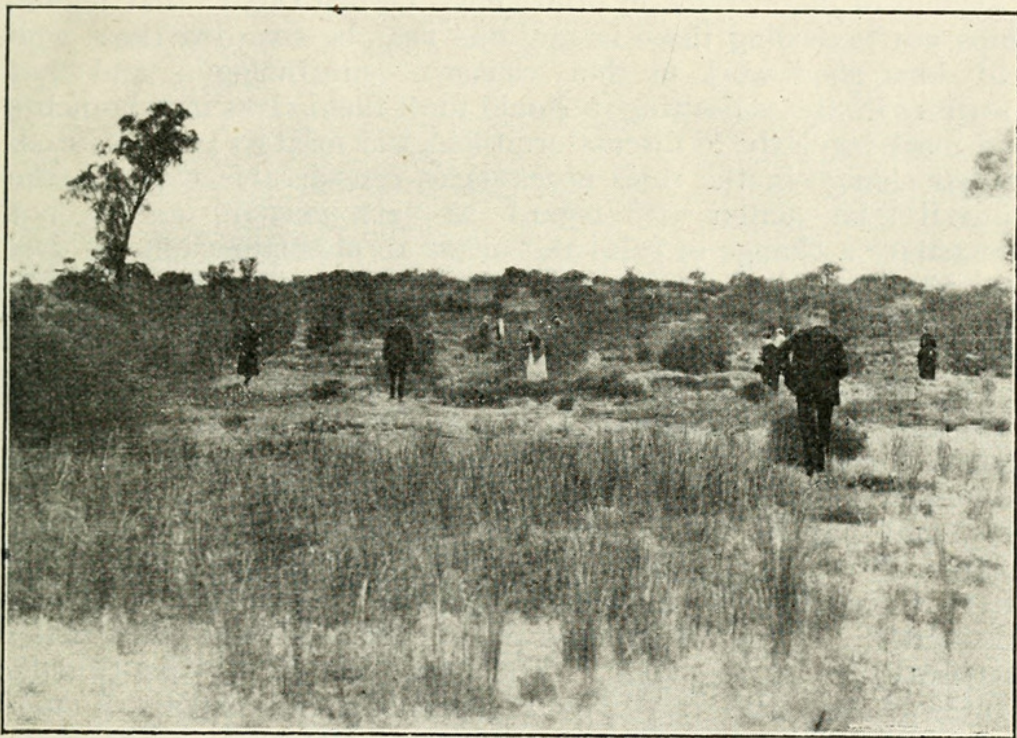
PHOTO. BY W. M'GOWAN, JUN.





adopted. The balance-sheet showed a reduced credit and the need for economy, especially as printing prices had doubled and paper and costs were still mounting.

The election of officers resulted as follows:—President, C. A. Barnard (Q.); vice-presidents, J. A. Leach (Vic.) and E. A. Le Souëf (W.A.); hon. general secretary, G. Finlay; hon. treasurer, Z. Gray; hon. editor *The Emu*, J. A. Leach; assistant editor, R. H. Croll; hon. librarian, F. E. Wilson; curators—(a) Skins, J. E. Chubb, (b) Eggs, J. A. Ross, (c) Photographs, &c., L. G. Chandler; hon. auditors, J. Barr and J. Hedding. State secretaries: A. S. Le Souëf (N.S.W.), A. H. Chisholm (Q.), Capt. S. A. White



Delegates leaving the train in the Desert.

PHOTO. BY H. E. HIRST, R.A.O.U., GEELONG.

(S.A.), B. Leake (W.A.), C. Lord (Tas.), W. Oliver (N.Z.), G. Hill (N.T.), and C. Zimmer (Papua). Members of Council:—Victoria, C. L. Barrett and Col. G. Horne; New South Wales, Dr. E. A. D'Ombraïn, F. C. Morse, and N. Cayley; Queensland, E. M. Cornwall, H. Longman, and Henry Tryon; South Australia, E. Ashby and Prof. J. B. Cleland; Western Australia, P. T. Sandland and T. P. Draper; Tasmania, H. S. Dove, Colonel F. M. Evans; ex-presidents (*ex-officio* members), Surg.-Gen. Sir C. S. Ryan, A. J. Campbell, A. H. E. Mattingley, D. Le Souëf, R. Hall, A. F. Basset Hull, J. W. Mellor, and Dr. W. MacGillivray.

Many new members were elected, and D. Le Souëf, late hon. general secretary and the first hon. secretary of the R.A.O.U.,



was unanimously elected an honorary member in recognition of distinguished service rendered to the R.A.O.U. since its inception.

Many matters were discussed and resolutions agreed to at meetings continued at the Museum and at the Cave House, Yallingup. The chief of these stated that the State Game Laws should be co-ordinated (sub-committee appointed); that strong representations be made to State Governments to restrict grazing rights and timber-cutting in National Parks and bird sanctuaries; that the use of the pea-rifle be restricted to persons over 18 years of age; that the time required for notice of congress business be reduced to the minimum necessary to secure adequate notice; that provision be made for voting by proxy and by post; that a system of distinctions in ornithology be instituted; that fellowships not exceeding three in any one year be awarded those who had done good work in the science of ornithology; and that members in States desiring it should form themselves into branches and meet regularly to discuss ornithological matters; that as each formal change in the rules necessitates considerable expense, the Council take action with regard to such matters as do not necessitate a change of rules and await an opportune time to deal with the other matters; and that the editors of *The Emu* adopt as soon as possible the approved names accepted by the Check-list committee for the second edition.

The address of the retiring president, Mr. A. F. Basset Hull, unfortunately prevented from attending by Parliamentary duties, was well received, and gave rise to a valuable discussion. The address was ordered to be printed in *The Emu*.

Several papers were presented and discussed—"Forgotten Feathers," by A. J. Campbell; "The Watling Drawings," by A. H. Chisholm; "The Birds of the Perth District," by W. B. Alexander; "The Relationship of the Western Australian Avifauna," by Robert Hall; "The *Times* Review of John Gould's 'Birds of Australia'"; "The Migration and Movements of Australian Birds," by A. Gilbert (a committee—Messrs. A. J. Campbell, C. L. Barrett, and A. H. Mattingley—was appointed to collate statistics).

Specimens were exhibited and examined. E. Ashby (S.A.) exhibited a unique specimen of the Pink-breasted Robin, from Tasmania, and several Humming-Birds; A. J. Campbell exhibited the skin of a Western Australian Bristle-Bird taken about 50 years ago. A. S. Le Souëf showed beautiful plates of birds and eggs painted by Mr. Neville Cayley, R.A.O.U., for the forthcoming work on the birds of Australia.

E. Ashby introduced a valuable discussion on the necessity of active propaganda for bird protection. Members should address school children whenever possible. A discussion showed unanimity of belief that the tame cat gone wild is the worst enemy of native bird-life.

Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock, who had just arrived from an ornithological expedition to Dirk Hartog Island, gave some interesting notes.











It was decided to hold the next congress in Sydney during October, 1921, and to hold the 21st anniversary the following year in Adelaide, where the inaugural meeting of the R.A.O.U. was held.

The bird collections of the Museum were examined, and the numerous living birds (many free) at the Zoo were admired.

Official meetings and receptions were held at the Town Hall, Perth, by the Lord Mayor; at the beautiful and well-kept Zoological Gardens, by the trustees of the Zoological and Acclimatization Society; by the State Government at Rottnest Island, some miles out in the open ocean, where many relics of the early days were examined with interest; and at the great Mundaring Weir, the source of the water supply carried over 450 miles to the goldfields at Kalgoorlie and the Boulder. Many small parties made day trips, and were always well and hospitably treated.

Public lectures on birds and general and economic ornithology were given at the University by D. Le Souëf (His Excellency the Governor, Sir Francis Newdegate, K.C.M.G., presiding) and Dr. J. A. Leach (Prof. Dakin presiding). Capt. White lectured to 1,200 pupils of combined schools (C. Andrews, Esq., Director of Education, presiding), and the three lecturers named visited educational institutions and addressed the students.

A profitable week was spent on the south-west coast. The Cave House at Yallingup was a good centre. The large party was comfortably accommodated, and found interesting material and good facilities for work. Parties, under the guidance of Mr. Dugdale, postmaster at Yallingup, visited the Canal Rocks and the famous Osprey's nest at Cape Mentelle, near the mouth of the Margaret River, within a few miles of the place where Grace Bussell, the "Australian Grace Darling," performed the remarkable feat of saving many lives from the wreck of the *Georgette*. Helenbrook, the home of the Bussells; the deserted timber town of Karridale, with its disused church, school, houses, and railway; Augusta, on its beautiful harbour; and Cape Leeuwin, at the south-west corner of Australia, were visited. Motor-cars travelled rapidly over the well-made roads of this generally level and heavily-timbered locality of high rainfall. Caves were abundant and interesting. The extremely rough coast, with many sunken rocks, swept by huge waves and masses of spray, lent variety and interested some photographers, though the rough conditions disappointed the experts on the *Chiton* group of Mollusca (shell-fish).

The officials of the Railway, Education, and Forests Departments, and the Tourist Bureau, assisted in every way possible, while Mr. C. Herbert, Government Botanist, and Mr. Clarke, Entomologist of the Forests Department, accompanied the delegates on some of the excursions.

The wild-flowers of Western Australia are outstandingly beautiful, and are known and appreciated by all visitors and residents. Local birds, however, are not so well known. Fortunately, we were able to dissipate the widespread belief that Western Australia



## ANNUAL

Year ended

RECEIPTS.						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To	Balance, 1st July, 1919	...	...	...	...			...	72	14	2
„	Subscriptions	...	...	...	...	218	4	6			
„	„	Arrears	...	...	...	51	10	0			
„	„	Prepaid	...	...	...	34	2	6			
									303	17	8
„	Sales, £18 3s. 6d. ; Check-lists, 17s. 6d. ; Covers, £1 1s. 2d. ; Blocks, £3 ; Exchange, £3 2s. 9d. ...	...	...	...	...				26	4	11
„	Color Fund—Donations	...	...	...	...	43	18	6			
	H. L. W.	...	...	...	...	18	0	0			
	Advertisement	...	...	...	...	1	0	0			
									62	18	6
„	Trust Fund—Interest	...	...	...	...			...	45	0	0
									£510	14	7

ASSETS.						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Royal Bank—Credit Balance	...	...	...	...	...			...	0	18	8
Subscription Arrears	...	...	...	...	...	48	12	6			
Less prepaid	...	...	...	...	...	38	12	6			
									10	0	0
Library	...	...	...	...	...			...	325	0	0
Furniture and Specimens	...	...	...	...	...			...	185	0	0
Emus and Blocks	...	...	...	...	...			...	220	0	0
Tent and Material, &c.	...	...	...	...	...			...	3	17	6
Trust Account—Commonwealth 4½ % Bond	...	...	...	...	...			...	1,000	0	0
									£1,744	16	2

Z. GRAY, L.C.A., *Hon. Treasurer.*

MELBOURNE, 1st July, 1920



## STATEMENT

30th June, 1920.

## EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By <i>The Emu</i> , vol. xix.—Printing, &c. ...	261	6	3			
" " " Blocks ...	63	14	2			
" " " Color Plates ...	62	9	6			
" " " Reprints ...	19	15	9			
" " " Vol. xviii. Patrons ...	1	2	6			
				408	8	2
" Postage, £17 8s. 3d.; Stationery, £16 6s.; Insurance, £2 12s. 3d.; Commission, £1 10s. 8d.; Covers, £1 12s. 11d.; Binding, 15s.; Exchange, £2 18s. 2d.; Bank, 12s. 6d. ...				43	15	9
" Room—Gas, 10s. 3d.; Fittings, £1 2s.; Photos., 10s.; Cleaning, £1 6s.; Cartage, £2 2s.; Paste, 1s. 9d.; Honour Board, £7 ...				12	12	0
" Trust Fund—Rent, £32 10s.; Library, £7 17s.; Honour Board, £4 13s. ...				45	0	0
" Credit Balance, Royal Bank ...				0	18	8
				£510	14	7

## LIABILITIES.

Nil.

	£	s.	d.
Balance ...	1,744	16	2

£1,744 16 2

Audited and found correct.

JAS. BARR, F.C.P.A., }  
JAS. HEDDING, } *Hon. Auditors.*

MELBOURNE, 8th September, 1920.



had little in the way of bird-life and to remove the impression that, while a "Bird Day" was a good thing for eastern boys and girls, it was useless in the West. Interest in ornithology has been intensified, and it is probable that an annual Bird Day will be celebrated in the schools, and that a Gould League of Bird-Lovers of Western Australia will be established as the direct outcome of the visit of the R.A.O.U. to the western State.

Some members returned to the Eastern States by steamer, and utilized good opportunities for study of the flight of the numerous and interesting Albatrosses.\*

Other members made excursions to many parts of the huge State. Reports following give some of the results. This first visit serves also to indicate the best localities for future visits to the West.

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### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

TO THE MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE 1920 ANNUAL MEETING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—For the second time I have to express my regret at being unable to address you personally at the annual meeting. You have paid me the highest honour in electing me as your President for two years in succession, and I have been prevented by official duties from acknowledging my indebtedness to you or voicing the *non sum dignus* that I feel so deeply.

Our general honorary secretary has given you a *résumé* of the work of the past year—in which, unfortunately, I have taken but small share—and you will now be called upon to place the seal of your approval on the labours of the Council. Inevitably, in such an association as ours, the bulk of the work falls upon the shoulders of the few who have the opportunity of gathering together at stated intervals in the home of the Union. We who are situated so far from that centre can only sympathize and (I fear too often) criticise! For my own shortcomings I can only plead want of leisure and that stimulus to greater effort which arises from association with keener fellow-workers.

To the future, then, I will direct the remainder of my few remarks, lightly sketching the lines upon which much useful work remains to be done.

Notwithstanding the considerable amount of field work that has been accomplished during the past ten years, largely under the guiding hand of Mr. H. L. White, by Messrs. M'Lennan, Jackson, and Whitlock, together with the individual efforts of Captain White, Dr. Macgillivray, and others, there are many avenues still open to the earnest field ornithologist, and especially to him who has the leisure to devote to the sustained study of some problem. Let me instance one subject of investigation that

\* The photographs of flying Albatrosses were taken by Hugh Macknight, late A.I.F., from the troopship *Argyleshire*, on 6th September, 1919, about ten days before reaching Adelaide from Durban.





1921. "Annual Congress and Field Excursion of the R.A.O.U." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(3), 114–120.

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