

comprised Messrs. Barrett, Chisholm, Gaukrodger, Brennan, Musgrave, Carter and Sloane. The extent of their visits was from a few hours to several days, and all were the guests of Mrs. Geissmann and Miss Hilda Geissmann at their hospitable home, "Capo di Monte." Weather conditions, on the whole, were rather unfavorable, rain following a heat wave, but both the ornithologists and entomologists of the party had a very interesting time. Some attention was given also to flora, notably a fine old Cycad (*Macrozamia*) and a glorious lot of ravine orchids (*Sarcochilus fitzgeraldi*) that bedecked mossy rocks in a deep gorge.

Birds were plentiful. It was a delight to hear and see again those jungle-lovers that were missing from Byfield—among them Rifle-Birds, Regent and Satin Bower-Birds, Cat-Birds, Yellow-throated Scrub-Wrens, and Brown Warblers. The last-named bird (*Gerygone fusca*) made the fourth species of its genus we had seen in Queensland. Nest, adults and young were photographed.

Tambourine Mountain has to its credit nearly 200 species of birds. The only South Queensland jungle bird absent is *Atrichornis rufescens*, the Eastern Scrub-Bird, which is found in Queensland only on the main Macpherson Range.

Notes and Comments

The current number is devoted almost exclusively to the Annual Meeting of the Union, and the various excursions organised in connection therewith.

The 1924 Congress was unique in several features, and it is hoped that members who were unable to be present will appreciate a fuller account of it than has been published of most previous congresses of the Union.

In the first place, the 23rd Congress was honoured by the presence at most of its sessions of His Majesty's representative in the State where it was held. His Excellency Sir Mathew Nathan, G.C.M.G., Governor of Queensland, specially journeyed from Brisbane to Rockhampton to take part in the conference. His presence was inspiring to the members as a proof that their labours on behalf of bird study and protection are appreciated by one whose high position makes his opinion of great value. The presence of the Governor also tended to increase the interest of the people of Queensland in the work of the R.A.O.U., and to prevent the inhabitants of the Rockhampton district from regarding the visiting ornithologists as mere cranks.

In the second place, the Congress was the first to be held at a city which is not one of the State capitals. Rockhampton is the principal city of the central division of Queensland, which has an

area larger than some of the existing States of the Commonwealth, and its inhabitants undoubtedly appreciated the recognition shown by the Union of the importance of their city. A civic reception was accorded to members on their arrival, and subsequently they were entertained by the Mayor in the city's botanic gardens.

The fact that the city was smaller than those in which previous meetings have been held made it possible to arrange numerous short excursions to localities in the neighbourhood where plenty of birds were to be seen. Most of the localities thus visited during the Congress were bird sanctuaries, many of which owe their existence to the very active Central Queensland Native Birds Protection Association, an admirable Rockhampton organisation which might well serve as a pattern to bird-lovers and sportsmen in other centres.

In the third place, the camp at Byfield was in a locality which had never previously been visited by ornithologists. Those who took part had no idea what birds they would find there, and the exploration of the scrubs of the Byfield district, as well as the visit to North Keppel Island, broke entirely new ground and added considerably to our knowledge of the distribution of Australian birds.

The Congress was noteworthy also in that it marked the retirement from the presidency and from the editorship of *The Emu* of Dr. J. A. Leach, who as vice-president and later as president has been chairman of most of the Union's meetings for many years past, and whose editorial connection with this journal has lasted for over ten years. Members accorded him the highest honour in their power by unanimously electing him an Honorary Member of the Union.

It was singularly unfortunate that the editor and the assistant editor of *The Emu* found it necessary at the same time to resign on account of the pressure of other duties. The new editors, who have taken over the work at short notice and without previous experience, trust that members of the Union will treat any faults they may discover with the indulgence usually granted to beginners. Criticism or comments will be welcomed, and it is hoped that with the aid of the printing committee and advice from members generally, the magazine may continue to retain its high standard, and that members of the R.A.O.U. will still be able to take a pride in their journal.

In view of the discussion on the International Museum of Comparative Oology which took place at the recent Congress, and the resolution as to that organisation which was carried (*ante* p. 196), members will read with interest the following paragraph which appeared in *Nature*, the leading English scientific journal, on September 13th, 1924:—

"Ornithologists have recently been hearing a good deal of the International Museum of Comparative Oology at Santa Barbara, California. We have now before us the first number of the Journal of this Museum, edited by the director, W. L. Dawson, and entitled *The Comparative Oologist*. Throughout, the claim is made that oology is an independent science of considerable importance—once indeed we are told that 'Oology is the science of one half of the biologic process'; but the Journal itself enables us to see how much weight is to be attached to these claims. We will content ourselves with one passage, in which the editor informs us that the shell of a bird's egg has been formed in the ovary, 'that innermost sanctuary of life!' and therefore enables us (how is not stated) to penetrate into the mysteries of the 'reproductive stream itself.' Numerous other quotations could be made to show that Mr. Dawson, while admirably qualified to write of generalities in a high-faluting style, appears to be unfamiliar with elementary facts concerning his special subject-matter. We wonder what men like Dr. R. Ridgway, Dr. Shufeldt, Mr. Oberholser, or the Rev. F. Jourdain will feel when they see themselves associated with the highly original avian anatomy and physiology of the sort we have quoted. We may also quote from the rules: 'Any person of scientific integrity, having attained the age of 18, who is interested in the pursuit of oology as a science *or in the collecting of bird's eggs* (italics ours) may become a 'Scientific Member' of the Museum.' That is what many had supposed: now we know it. But the Museum cannot have it both ways. It can be a centre for egg-collectors, patrons of what is an amusing and interesting sport if not carried (as unfortunately sometimes happens) to the pitch of mania. Or it can be an institution for the scientific study of egg-shells, from which we may doubtless expect some, though not very much or very valuable, new knowledge. But it must not think that it can use science as a cloak for mere collecting; and that is precisely what, with its present rules and organisation, it appears to be trying to do."

Mr. N. W. Cayley, R.A.O.U., the well-known Australian bird artist, informs us that he will be pleased to paint pictures, free of cost, for reproduction in *The Emu*, to illustrate papers contributed by members of the Union. The beautiful coloured plate in the present number is from a painting which Mr. Cayley made by request, and is the best possible evidence of the value of his generous offer.

All communications in connection with *The Emu*, and articles or photos for publication should in future be addressed to the Editor at Sherwood, near Brisbane, not to the official address of the Union.

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