

ing before the illustrated lecture by Mr. Campbell on "Sanctuary" at 8 p.m. Mr. Bryant submitted a scheme for local nomination and election of members of Council in order to save last-minute nominations being sent to the Secretary and to obviate the expense of general elections if possible. The suggestions were adopted. Mr. Bryant moved that the next Congress be held in South Australia. Seconded and carried.

Correspondence

STRAW-NECKED IBIS AND GRASSHOPPER DESTRUCTION

To the Editor

Sir—Mr. J. Neil McGilp deserves the thanks of members for his article, excellent as usual, on birds and grasshoppers, published in the last *Emu*. He has given a clear picture of the activities of the birds at a time when the grasshoppers have assumed plague proportions. If that phase only is considered, however, certain birds may get due credit, others undue credit, and the value of others may even be discounted in a consideration of the problem of grasshopper control.

Frankly, I think Mr. McGilp has discounted the value of the Straw-necked Ibis—as a controlling agent of the endemic insect and of the sporadic outbreak, which must precede vast plagues, I consider it stands alone. Observation of the bird at work will show its methods. It is essentially a "percussionist," tapping every square foot of ground, and how expert it is can only be guessed. Its bill is one which can probe the hardest soils and explore every hole and cranny revealed by tapping, its legs are so long that it covers wide areas without seeming to hurry, and when one considers that each female grasshopper lays her whole batch of eggs embedded in a gelatinous matrix in one puncture of the soil it is not hard to visualize what the Ibis can do throughout late autumn, winter and early spring before the eggs begin to hatch.

Considerations of its natural history will show that the bird's best work is done at such periods and that it is unreasonable to expect to see it in the plague areas far removed from its age-old breeding haunts, whither, whether it breeds or not, most of the birds repair in November, December and January.

Again thanking Mr. McGilp for his informative and thought-provoking article.

Yours, etc.,

Toowoomba, Qld.,
November 25, 1935.

SPENCER ROBERTS.