

TRUST ACCOUNT AS AT

LIABILITIES				
Amount at credit, 31/12/1956
				£1,070 0 0
				£1,070 0 0

The Bank pass-books and statements have been examined; the certificates of the Inscribed Stock registered in the name of the Union and in the names of the Trustees, received direct from the Registrar of the Commonwealth Inscribed Stock, also certificates of debentures received direct from the Commonwealth Trading Bank of Australia, are in agreement with the face value figures shown in the Balance Sheet and Trust Account.

Audited and found correct,

HUGH C. E. STEWART,
Hon. Auditor.

Royal Spoonbill in Tasmania

By MICHAEL SHARLAND, Hobart, Tas.

A rapid increase in water-bird populations was observed in Tasmania during late summer this year (1956-7), presumably the result of a wide dispersal of different species from receding waters in northern Victoria and the Riverina district of New South Wales. The most interesting occurrence was that of the Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*), a species not previously recorded from Tasmania.

On May 7 a message was received from Mr. G. L. Propsting, Kingston Beach, 11 miles south of Hobart, describing two unusual birds dabbling in the shallows of Brown's River which flows through a small marsh opposite his home. Their method of feeding had first attracted his attention and suggested that they were not White Egrets (*Egretta alba*) which also had been seen at intervals along the same stream and which are annual visitors to Tasmania. Half an hour later I was able to confirm his belief that they were spoonbills and be specific on the matter of identification.

Looking rather tired and resting on a mud-spit with bills tucked into feathers of the back, the birds were fairly docile and allowed me to approach close enough to obtain at least a 'record' photograph. A few minutes later two men in a rowing-boat disturbed them, and they waded into deeper water, where, when the boat had passed, they began to feed by dabbling their elongated bills into the mud and also by swinging the bills from side to side through the water like a pendulum.

Geese and ducks from a poultry farm edging the stream began to mingle with them, and they moved closer to shore to get away from these domesticated birds. Occasionally a

DECEMBER 31, 1956

ASSETS		
Commonwealth Government Inscribed Stock (face value)	£1,070	0 0
	£1,070	0 0

E. C. SOUTER,
Hon. Treasurer.

Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) darted down on them, recognizing them as strangers.

The Spoonbills remained there for some days, perched at night in a dead tree on the fringe of the river. They were most active at low tide, wading rapidly up and down the edges of the river and in the backwaters through the marsh. One or twice I was able to get within about 15 feet of them in shallow pools among the rushes.

Mr. J. R. Cunningham, of the Tasmanian Museum, reported that the birds were first seen at Kingston Beach on May 5. It is curious that they should have come to this extreme southern part of Tasmania when apparently suitable waters were available in the north and central parts of the State. It is assumed that to reach this district they had travelled more than 300 miles, if they had come from Victoria and not New South Wales, whence the distance would have been greater.

Either resting or feeding, the birds were inseparable. They moved up and down the river for a distance of about a quarter of a mile, wading and feeding, and remained always within a few yards of one another, whilst in roosting they perched close together on one limb. The species is sociable in habits and generally occurs in small numbers. It would be interesting to know how these two became separated from others of their kind and what influences caused them to cross the 200-mile Bass Strait dividing Victoria from Tasmania.

After the foregoing was written, a report was received from Mr. W. L. Ferrar, Buckland, that nine Royal Spoonbills had been seen feeding at Little Swanport on the East Coast.