

## OBITUARY

MR. N. L. ROBERTS

It is regrettable to have to record that Mr. Noel Lee Roberts, a competent zoologist and journalist, and a member of long standing of the R.A.O.U. and the B.O.U., died in Sydney on December 6, 1967. He was aged 77 years. Mr. Roberts had association with three countries. Born in New Zealand—on August 28, 1890—he was taken as a boy to his ancestral country of Wales, and after receiving education and growing up there he migrated, in young manhood, to Australia.

Most of his working life was devoted to newspapers and periodicals, both in Queensland and New South Wales, and both on the journalistic and business sides. For the most part, he concentrated on rural topics, and because of the knowledge so acquired he was in recent years a valued member of the staff of *The Land*, a weekly journal published in Sydney.

Quite early in his Australian career Noel Roberts developed interest in two aspects of zoology, namely ornithology and arachnology. His work on the life-histories of spiders, largely accomplished in his own garden in Sydney, became quite distinctive, and from 1935 onward he contributed many informative papers on bird-life to *The Emu*. As may be noted from the list contained in Whittell's *Literature of Australian Birds* (1954), all of these ornithological writings were based on field-work. They included in particular notes on associations between birds and insects and spiders, and observations on certain aspects of bird behaviour such as injury-feigning; this last formed the subject of his presidential address to the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales in 1944.

A man of wide and sound reading, Mr. Roberts was also a musician of quality—he had been both an organist and preacher in religious circles in his early days—and, because he possessed also a most amiable disposition, he was a thoroughly agreeable companion. One of his two daughters, now in England, inherited her father's musical tastes and became an eminent pianist; the other is a medical practitioner. Two sons also remain, one in Sydney and the other in Canada. Mrs. Roberts died, after a lengthy illness, a few months before the death of her husband.—

January 3, 1968.

A. H. CHISHOLM.