

Solely in the interests of Australian ornithology, I claim to be one of Mr. Mathews's best friends; therefore I hope he will take this "rebuttal" in the spirit in which it is given.—Yours, &c.,

A. J. CAMPBELL.

The Dry Season.

Birds and Drought.—The many water-fowl in southern Victoria lately indicate how dry the northern districts of New South Wales and Southern Queensland must be. For instance, take as near to Melbourne as Woodend. I lately saw a paddock literally covered with Straw-necked Ibis feeding on caterpillars, &c.; also, on isolated water-holes, were frequently pairs of Spoon-bills, White-fronted and Pacific Herons—the latter generally seem to drive off any others of their kind that wish to come to their particular pond. Cormorants are much more plentiful than usual, frequently visiting small ornamental ponds in private gardens for the sake of the gold-fish. I shot a large Black Cormorant in the Melbourne Zoo lately that had swallowed a gold-fish that weighed three-quarters of a pound, so these birds are no good in such places. Only a month ago a Darter, which is a rare bird in Victoria, was seen in the National Park at Wilson's Promontory, and a skin of this bird was sent lately from the Western District of Victoria by a well-known resident, asking what bird it was; yet the inquirer had been an observer of bird-life in that district for 40 years! Fish are having a bad time at present. *Tribonyx*, Coots, and Pectoral Rails are just as plentiful in districts where they are rarely seen.

Large flocks of Crows, apparently *Corone australis*, are very much in evidence in southern Victoria this year—probably the old birds with their young. I have seen several distinct flocks lately (December); possibly the dry season up north is bringing them further south than usual. Their loud, raucous call can be heard for a considerable distance, especially when hundreds utter it at the same time. Insect life must be more plentiful than we usually realize when these hundreds, or we may say thousands, of birds can find sufficient food to eat.—S. J. CECIL LE SOUËF.
Melbourne.

Nomenclature.

Now that the war has been happily ended, and the members of the Check-list Committee who are on active service will be returning, the work of preparing the second edition of the "Official Check-list" will be resumed. It will interest members to know that a strong committee of ornithologists has already begun the preparation of an authoritative list of the world's birds.

Meanwhile, the Council has confirmed its previous determination that authors of papers should use the names of the Official "Check-list," but may, if they so desire, add the name used in Mathews's 1913 "List."