

is that in New South Wales these birds have now been given full protection for a period of two years. The Farmers and Settlers' Association is entitled to credit for this reform of a wanton and economically rotten law, which permitted the wholesale slaughter of these birds in all parts of the State. As a matter of fact, the farmers' delegates to the annual conference of the association sought to have quail protected for a longer period than two years. Many of them fought to have a five-years' period of protection, but as other influences were at work, a compromise was effected. The Farmers and Settlers' Association Conference first moved in the matter in 1922. It agreed to a resolution urging the Government to amend the law so as to give greater protection to these birds. Nothing was done, however, and the conference returned to the subject in August, 1923. The association, fortunately, has now so much political power that the Government could no longer ignore its demands—and so we have quail protected in New South Wales for a period of two years. At the end of that period, the position is to be reviewed. In the meantime, desperate efforts are being made by alleged sportsmen and others (who cannot spend a holiday happily unless they are slaughtering quail) to influence the authorities against the enforcement of the Act, in so far as it applies to these birds. As a matter of fact, the new Birds and Animals' Protection will never be reasonably effective while the law is administered under existing conditions. The law is sound enough: so was the old enactment. But it is futile to try and protect wild birds and animals adequately with unsatisfactory administration. The writer the other day heard one of the "honorary rangers" appointed by the Government under this Act declare openly that he would go on shooting quail, because, if caught, "only a nominal fine would be imposed, and the game was cheap at the price." That just about sums up the situation in New South Wales. The much-vaunted new law is no more effective in reality than was the old—and it never will be effective while magistrates are content to impose nominal fines for gross breaches of the Act. This is a matter which the R.A.O.U. should take up and vigorously and incessantly prosecute throughout Australia. In this matter of securing better protection for quail, it should be noted that the farmers stood alone in their fight. They received no assistance from any other organisation. What we need in this country is more co-ordination among the bodies which aim at securing more effective protection for useful and beautiful birds.—W. M. SHERRIE, R.A.O.U., N.S.W.

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CROWS AND THE BLOWFLY PEST.

In a recent report on pastoral country known as the North-east and East of the Burra appears the following:—"Experi-

ments are still being tried to combat the *blowfly pest*, but at present it has not been successful, but the fox and the crow play a very important part in eradicating much of the trouble. During portions of the year the fox does good in combating the rabbits and fly pest, but in the lambing season plays such havoc that at this period pastoralists wage war on the fox.

It will be readily seen that the once persecuted Crow is now considered useful, whereas not five years ago, this bird was destroyed in that particular part of South Australia. This tends to show that even without protection by law, the Crow has secured protection for the good that it does. There is no need to protect him in that district at least. I realise, even as big a supporter of the Crow as I am, that protection by legislation will not improve matters, but may do considerable harm, as there are yet hundreds of men who destroy the Crow, and would possibly even go to greater trouble if they were "prevented by law." I believe that in S.A. at least I was one of the first land-owners to realise the value of the Crow, and when I mentioned the good it did, I was not well received. Now things have changed. Capt. White has done good work in persuading townspeople that the Crow is a useful bird. As for the country in South Australia, I do not think it will be long before the Crow will be the "most protected bird."

It was extremely pleasing to me to see mention of the Crow in this report on a piece of the country in which I have never been. The increase in Crows in S.A. has astonished me. I heard the other day that "Crows are in flocks around Peterborough and Terowie, and that no one is trying to shoot them." So the "Black Devil" is coming into his own at last.—J. NEIL, MCGILP, R.A.O.U., King's Park, South Australia.

Camera Craft

Notes from Merriwa.—Appended hereto are a few notes on various species of our birds that may be of interest to readers of *The Emu*:—

Uroaetus audax. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—On September 30th, 1923, I found a nest containing two young birds, on the edge of which was a dead rabbit with a spring-trap still attached to its leg. The trap weighed 23 ounces, and must have been a clumsy obstacle for the Eagle to manage. These birds are common in the district, and there is no doubt that, where possible, they prefer rabbits as food to lambs. It is a sheep-raising country, and yet in nearly 10 years' experience, which includes well over 200 nests observed, we have only two or three times found lambs on the nest, while I have seen the remains of as many as 14 rabbits on one nest alone.