



The late Colonel W. V. Legge, C.M.B.O.U., first President R.A.O.U.

About Members.

MR. G. M. Mathews, F.R.S. Edin., has been elected a member of committee, British Ornithologists' Union, in place of Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., who retired by seniority. Although Mr. Mathews resides in Britain, he is the first Australian (by birth) elected on the committee of the venerable B.O.U.

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CAPT. S. A. White, R.A.O.U., South Australia, has been elected a "Colonial Member" of the British Ornithologists' Union—a coveted prize, as only ten living overseas ornithologists can hold that distinction at one time. Capt. White is to be congratulated accordingly.

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OUR member and keen-sighted observer, Private Les. G. Chandler, has been slightly wounded (gassed) in France, where he has been for over two years. Fellow-members will sympathize with him in his temporary disablement. Sympathy is also extended to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Chandler, of "Maloort," Frankston, with the hope that their good son will soon return to his humanitarian duties in the Field Ambulance Corps.

Obituary Notices.

LEGGE.—On the 25th March, 1918, at his residence, "Cullenswood House," Cullenswood, Colonel W. V. Legge, late Royal Artillery, in his 78th year.

THE late Colonel Legge, ex-Commandant Tasmanian Defence Forces, had a distinguished and useful career. He was born at Cullenswood, which is near St. Mary's, Tasmania, during "yellow-haired September," 1841, his father, the late Mr. R. V. Legge, being one of the earliest settlers in Eastern Tasmania.

Young Legge was destined for the army, and proceeded to England with his parents at the age of 12, and crossed the Isthmus of Panama on mule-back. He was educated chiefly at Bath, also in France and Germany, and was a most proficient linguist, having taken the prize for German at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (which he entered as a cadet), and was beaten only in French by a cadet of French extraction. In 1862 he received his commission, and served first at Dover Castle with the garrison, then was transferred to Melbourne, where he was stationed with his battery (No. 7 of the 2nd Brigade) during the Duke of Edinburgh's visit. He was in charge of the detachment which fired the royal salute on the Duke's arrival in Port Phillip.

1867. From Melbourne his battery was transferred to Colombo, and he remained in Ceylon for nine years, where his family of three was born. On his return voyage to England he was wrecked in the Red Sea. In order to the better carry on the work of his book ("The Birds of Ceylon"), he took a staff appointment at Aberystwith, in Cardiganshire, which he held for about five years, and was next offered by the then Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Cambridge, the most coveted appointment of all artillery officers—namely, inspector, or instructor, of experimental gunnery. Owing to his father's failing health he refused this, even when offered lengthened furlough to pay his parents a visit. Col. Legge had also experience as an engineer officer, and supervised the construction of some of the Portsmouth forts. Latterly he was for 11 years Commandant of the Tasmanian military forces, and after the Boer War was retired on reaching the age limit. He then took to pastoral pursuits.

Colonel Legge's hobby was natural science—forestry, physiography, with a strong leaning towards ornithology. He was one of the founders and first president of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.* His *magnum opus* was "The Birds of Ceylon," two large volumes, quarto size, illustrated with coloured plates by the best artists of the day. The work is still a standard one, and in our library the two handsome books are inscribed, "Presented to the R.A.O.U. by its first President—The Author." In 1887 he published a useful "Systematic List of Tasmanian Birds." Col. Legge was rather a "lumper" than a "splitter." In his introductory note he states:—"There has been an unnecessary separation of genera in many families of Australian birds. Nothing is more perplexing to the young student than this, and I have, in cases where there are no differences of external structure, discarded many such genera."

At the Hobart meeting (January, 1892) of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Col. Legge contributed an important paper, "On the Geographical Distribution of the Australian *Limicolæ*." The paper dealt with 46 species, grouped under their respective families. He inadvertently omitted the Sanderling, but included the Little Indian Ringed Plover (*Ægialitis jerdoni*), as he believed it to be the second species (or sub-species) found in the Papuan Region, and no doubt also on the contiguous coast-line of Northern Australia.

Col. Legge took a prominent part in the compilation of the "List of Vernacular Names for Australian Birds,"† which was presented at the Sydney session of the A.A.A.S., 1898. He made several special trips across the Strait for the purpose of conferring

* His comprehensive address on "Current Australian Ornithology" appears in *Emu*, iii., pp. 142-155, and probably his latest written and interesting note, "A New Raptor for Tasmania," may be seen in the last volume (xvii.) of *The Emu*, pp. 103-105.

† Popularly known as the "Yellow List," on account of the colour of its wrapper.

with the more centrally situated fellow-members of that committee.

Because of his extensive ornithological knowledge in both northern and southern hemispheres, Col. Legge will be much missed at the deliberations of the R.A.O.U. "Check-list" committee, of which he was an original member. His ripe judgment was exceedingly useful to the committee of the present official "Check-list." When debating points or examining specimens younger members in experience often came to a quicker decision, but it was characteristic of the Colonel that in the execution of any duty he was conscientious to a degree, and never gave a decision without due consideration of every side of the question.

Colonel Legge and the late Dr. Bowdler Sharpe were firm friends, and the former frequently, when in England, visited John Gould, the "Father of Australian Ornithology." Possibly the passing of the Colonel has severed the last living link between members of the R.A.O.U. and the great "Pictorial Ornithologist," who, by common consent, has benefited Australian ornithology more than any other author, past or present.

Colonel Legge was a Colonial Member of the British Ornithologists' Union and a Honorary Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union.

Even to those who knew him best there was an amount of modest or natural reserve about the personality of our deceased member. His Christian-like courtesy was perfect, as was his gentlemanly demeanour at all times and in all places.

Two sons (Mr. Vincent Legge, Victoria, and Mr. Robert Legge, Tasmania) and his widow (by second marriage) survive him, to whom all members of the R.A.O.U. respectfully extend their most sincere sympathy.

A TASMANIAN TRIBUTE.

The death of Colonel Legge will make a gap hard to fill in the ranks of Tasmanian ornithologists. For many years he has always contributed the ornithological notes to any special handbook or special meetings of scientific men concerning the natural history of our island. He was a frequent contributor to the papers and proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania, and his papers (numbering seventeen) are mainly concerned with ornithology.

It may not be generally known that the splendid collection of skins that Col. Legge made in Ceylon while engaged on his classic history of the birds of that island are in the Hobart Museum. Strange to say, it was only a few days before news was received of his death that I had the privilege of re-arranging the whole of this splendid collection. This was presented to the Museum in 1902.—CLIVE E. LORD.