

Mr. C. French, F.L.S., the well-known Government Entomologist of Victoria, who has also devoted some time to the study of the economic side of bird life, has been elected a Fellow of both the Entomological Society of London and of the Society of Economic Entomology of America. The honour is well deserved.

Mr. F. M. Littler, of Launceston, who has not only contributed valuable papers to the *The Emu*, but has endeavoured to popularise the study of birds in Tasmania by his many articles on the subject in the local press, has also received the Fellowship of the British society named above, having found time whilst closely observing birds to learn much of Tasmania's insect life as well.

Mr. Geo. Graham, of Scott's Creek, near Cobden, Victoria, manager of Mr. Frank Madden's station, recently had a narrow escape from losing his life through being twice shot by a young man—a farmer of the neighbourhood—who appears to have been labouring under an imaginary grievance. For some days Mr. Graham's condition was considered critical, but he has happily made a good recovery, and been enabled to resume active work.

Members will congratulate Mr. Robert Hall, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S., on his safe return to Melbourne after an absence of ten months travelling in Asia and Europe. The most important part of his journey, ornithologically speaking, was his voyage down the River Lena, during which, with his companion, Mr. R. E. Trebilcock, he collected about 90 species of birds, in all some 400 skins. The Hon. Walter Rothschild has purchased this collection, together with the collector's field-notes, which in due course, it is understood, will appear in *The Ibis*.

Alteration of Close Season for Ducks and Quails in Victoria.

COLONEL Legge, F.Z.S., in his presidential address before the Congress of the Aust. O.U. at Hobart, said:—"In this State the close seasons have been changed, one might say, backward and forward, on the motion of members of Parliament, who know nothing of the economy of birds, and act upon information of sportsmen who have not carried out careful investigations and who take the occurrence of a particularly and abnormally early brood, or a second, or may be a third brood, as depicting the *normal* time of breeding. Hence we get unsound legislation, which does more harm than good."

Unfortunately Tasmania is not the only State where political busybodies interfere, against expert advice, with such matters as close seasons for birds. In Victoria the Minister for Public Works (Mr. Thomas Bent) has seen fit to curtail what has been proved by keen inquiry and experience to be the proper

close seasons for Ducks and Quails. The opinion of officers responsible for the due administration of the *Game Act*, that no alteration should be made, was backed up by such independent bodies as the Zoological Society, the Field Naturalists' Club, and the Aust. O.U. And yet it is deliberately ignored. The associations named have no end save the due protection of our birds to serve, and some of their members have for years sacrificed both time and money in painstaking research to ascertain the proper breeding seasons of the various species. Yet the Minister of a day, for some occult reason (possibly for no reason save a desire to acquire popularity with pot-hunters, or a mere fancy that he is better informed in the matter), with a stroke of his pen, or a mere *ipse dixit*, can frustrate the good result of all these years of work.

The evidence is overwhelming that the recent Ministerial decision is an egregious blunder. Can the close season as newly arranged be called protection at all? Is there even humanitarianism in an action which will permit the destruction of brooding Ducks, thus leaving clutches of defenceless young to perish, and nestfuls of eggs to rot, as will certainly be the case if the season when they may be shot opens earlier than the end of January? No bird-lover will think so.

The following has been proclaimed :—

ALTERATION IN CLOSE SEASON FOR QUAILS AND WILD DUCKS.

Quails of all kinds (other than Californian Quail) in the Counties of Anglesey, Benambra, Bendigo, Bogong, Borung, Dalhousie, Delatite, Gladstone, Gunbower, Kara Kara, Karkarooc, Lowan, Millewa, Moira, Rodney, Talbot, Tatchera, Weeah, from the 1st day of July to the 6th day of February next following, both dates inclusive in each year.

And in the Counties of Bourke, Buln Buln, Croajingolong, Dargo, Dundas, Evelyn, Follett, Grant, Grenville, Hampden, Heytesbury, Mornington, Normanby, Polwarth, Ripon, Tambo, Tanjil, Villiers, Wonnangatta, from the 1st day of July to the last day of February next following, both dates inclusive in each year.

Wild Ducks and Teals of all kinds, Wood Duck, or Maned Goose, from the 1st day of July to the 26th day of December next following, both dates inclusive in each year.

[Since the above was written, the following has appeared in *The Argus*, 31/12/03 :—Hopetoun.—The shooting season for Wild Ducks opened here on 28th December, and large numbers of sportsmen from all parts of the district came to Hopetoun. They all did well, but it was considered by everyone that the season opened too soon, as large broods of young Ducks, in some cases only a few days old, could be seen on every sheet of water. The close season should at least extend another month.]