

Correspondence

THE EXPORT OF LIVE AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

The Editor of *The Emu*.

Sir,—As a member of a good many years' standing (almost since the commencement, in fact) of the R.A.O.U., I view with some apprehension one of the resolutions carried at the recent congress of that body, held at Adelaide: "That no export of Australian birds be allowed for profit."

May I be allowed to state the case as it appears to me, an ornithologist in the Old Country who has always taken a great interest in the avifauna of Australia? Years ago, mostly through studying Gould's works, I became interested in Australian birds. Their dried skins did not satisfy me, but only made me the more anxious to study their habits in life, the result being that eventually I kept in my aviary, a miniature Australian "bush," many species, and was able to study their breeding habits. Amongst those that bred there may be mentioned *Psephotus multicolor*

P. maculatus, &c.

for profit," for their supplies of foreign birds, and in future, as these supplies are to be stopped, the collections of the various Zoological Societies of Europe and America will have to be stocked with birds from Africa, India and South America. No longer will the visitor be cheered by the voice of the Kookaburra or the Magpie, which reminds the Australian visitor of his home in the bush, or the Englishman who has, like the present writer, visited the Antipodes on some never-to-be-forgotten expedition.

There are many private scientific aviculturists in Great Britain who keep their birds under the best possible conditions. Supposing these are able to obtain permits, how are they to get their birds home? Are they to trust them to the tender mercies of some ship's butcher? The thing is impracticable, and unless some professional collector is allowed to export, which he will only do "for profit," none will be exported. Surely if you licensed one or two reliable collectors who were known to be honest and to treat their birds well, and if the Resolution 2: "That no export of any bird in danger of extinction be permitted," were rigorously enforced, no harm could result.—Yours, etc.,

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[Export under proper conditions after inspection, through recognised scientific bodies, for scientific and educational purposes, is provided for. This it is felt will amply meet the needs of our esteemed member, Mr. Seth-Smith, and his enthusiastic co-workers who have added much to scientific knowledge of Australian birds.—Eds.]
