

Outings During the Adelaide Congress

By E. P. HANKS, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

The various outings on the R.A.O.U. programme during the Congress in Adelaide proved most interesting and were especially appreciated by interstate members.

On October 8, after the official opening and adjournment of the Congress, the whole party proceeded to the Botanic Gardens, where the Director, Mr. J. F. Bailey, acted as guide, and led a delightful ramble, pointing out plants of special interest and beauty. An unforgettable sight was the "Wistaria walk," with its two hundred feet of arched trellis, the whole a mass of pendent blooms in shades varying from deep mauve to white. At the kiosk, Mrs. J. Neil McGilp entertained members to afternoon tea, and a pleasant social hour was spent.

On October 9 a visit was paid to the aviaries of Mr. Simon Harvey at Kensington Gardens. A keen aviculturist, Mr. Harvey has housed the birds in ideal conditions. Three large flight houses, which contain a growing jungle of vegetation, open from a building in which a heating system is installed, and one may walk among trees where beautiful birds fly overhead, while Quail and Pigeons rustle in the undergrowth beside one's feet. In addition, there are extensive Parrot houses. The birds have responded readily to the "better than natural" conditions, and at the date of our visit the following species were breeding:—

Princess Parrot (*Polytelis alexandræ*), Turquoise Parrot (*Neophema pulchella*), Elegant Parrot (*N. elegans*), Gouldian Finch (*Poëphila gouldiæ*), Diamond Firetail (*Zonæginthus guttatus*), Crescent Honeyeater (*Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*), Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (*Meliphaga melanops*), Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*), Diamond Dove (*Geopelia cuneata*).

Other native birds noted in the aviaries were:—Northern Rosella (*Platycercus venustus*), Hooded Parrot (*Psephotus dissimilis*), Painted Finch (*Emblema picta*), Yellow-tailed Finch (*Donacola flaviprymna*), Chestnut-breasted Finch (*D. castaneothorax*), Masked Finch (*Poëphila personata*), Long-tailed Finch (*P. acuticauda*), Crimson Finch (*Neochmia phæton*), Star Finch (*Bathilda ruficauda*), Plumheaded Finch (*Aidemosyme modesta*), Beautiful Firetail (*Zonæginthus bellus*), Pictorella Finch (*Donacola pectoralis*), Banded Finch (*Steganopleura bichenovii*), Black-ringed Finch (*S. annulosa*), Red-browed

Finch (*Ægitha temporalis*), Regent Bower-Bird (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*), Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*), Plumed Pigeon (*Lophophaps plumifera*), King Quail (*Excalfactoria chinensis*), Little Quail (*Turnix velox*).

Afternoon tea was served to the guests, and later in the day a brief visit was paid to the beautiful old-world garden of Mr. A. Crompton at "Stonyfell," near Burnside.

The afternoon of October 10 was spent at the home of Captain S. A. White, at Fulham, where the party was entertained at afternoon tea and given the opportunity of inspecting the Captain's extensive collection of bird skins. Members took full advantage of the privilege offered, and spent a pleasant and profitable afternoon.

A Nesting Novelty.—It is an odd fact that for seven successive years, and possibly longer, a pair of Yellow Robins (*Eopsaltria australis*) at Wahroonga (North Sydney) have used scraps of newspaper to decorate their nest. It is assumed that the one pair of birds has been responsible, for all the nests have been built in a particular patch of casuarinas, and sometimes a second nest would be built in one season, when newspaper would again be introduced. A comparison of the photograph of the first "newsy" nest seen in 1923 (*Emu*, Vol. XXIII., plate 56), with the nest shown in the picture accompanying the present note, shows that the builders have become more artistic, weaving the "foreign" material into the nest instead of merely plastering it on. Incidentally, it is to be noted that the Robins are evidently tolerant as to politics, for they are just as ready to make use of scraps of the *Labor Daily* as they are to use portions of the conservative *Sydney Morning Herald*! It is certainly a curious thing that one pair of birds alone should develop and stabilise a taste for newspaper as nesting material, and Mr. H. Wolstenholme, R.A.O.U., who usually finds the little homes, observes jocularly that they seem to represent the rise of a new sub-species.—A. H. CHISHOLM, R.A.O.U., Sydney.

Blue Wren's Strange Meal.—In December last I was watching a party of Blue Wrens fossicking about the woodheap. One fully-fledged young bird was making a nuisance of itself—rushing up to the others in turn and asking to be fed in no uncertain manner. Suddenly one of them, perhaps less patient than the others, picked up a two-inch piece of string and offered it to the clamoring youngster. It went down at a gulp.—E. L. HYEM, R.A.O.U., Barrington, N.S.W.