

"The 'Squatter' is also known as the Partridge Pigeon. It used to be fairly common on the Upper Brisbane and the Lockyer, and was plentiful in the neighbourhood of Yeulba, and there were a good many on Baffle Creek. I am told it has disappeared from those parts, but I heard of some on the Dawson. Like the Flock Pigeon, it breeds on the ground and lays two eggs of the same creamy tone. I have seen the young ones, fully fledged, lie to a dog just like a Stubble Quail, allowing themselves to be caught; although described as strictly terrestrial, when flushed it perches or squats on the horizontal branch of a tree. It is the best Pigeon for the table of any that I know, being well flavoured and always tender."

Notes and Comments.

Members of the R.A.O.U. generally will join with Sydney members in extending warm sympathy to the Hon. State Secretary for N.S.W., Mr. N. W. Cayley, whose wife died on 16 January, 1927. Mr. Cayley has for many years been one of the most energetic workers possessed by the R.A.O.U., as well as being a leading ornithological artist, and his wife always rendered him a full measure of co-operation in his work. Two children, aged 5 and 2 years, respectively, remain.

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Mr. W. B. Alexander, M.A., C.F.A.O.U., a vice-president of the R.A.O.U., who returned to England nearly a year ago, went to Canada to attend the Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union at Ottawa during October. He had a most interesting time there (including a week-end visit to an island in Blue Sea Lake, in the province of Quebec, where he heard the famous demoniacal "laughter" of Loons), and then went to New York in time for the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

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Dr. A. Wetmore, assistant secretary of the United States National Museum, merits the congratulations of all members of the R.A.O.U. (of which he is a member) on his election as President of the American Ornithologists' Union. Previous to that election Dr. Wetmore wrote to the R.A.O.U. expressing appreciation of the new Checklist, a copy of which he had just received. "The List," he added, "should prove highly valuable to members of the Union and to others interested in Australian birds. Checklists in themselves are dry reading, but I must confess to having read the Appendix by Mr. Wolstenholme, on the derivation of the scientific names of Australian birds, with great attention. His effort will be highly useful to those who are working actively in other faunas."

A number of congratulatory messages in respect of the Checklist (Second edition) have been received by the R.A.O.U. As an instance, Mr. F. L. Berney, R.A.O.U., of Queensland, after referring to "the immense amount of work its compilation has entailed," says: "I am very glad the compilers have not been drawn into 'splitting,' particularly genus-splitting, which if carried to the extent desired by some writers could only lead to confusion and make in the end a farce of the generic term. The delay in publication has been probably a blessing in disguise, for it has given additional time for research and therefore helped the avoidance of errors. Our new Checklist (badly wanted) has been excellently carried out and is a credit to all concerned. I lift my hat to the Checklist Committee."

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Mr. A. J. Campbell writes:—Anent the Checklist, a recent reviewer, inadvertently no doubt, omitted a particular point. He was of opinion there was little difference between the Union's Checklist and that by Mr. G. M. Mathews, and therefore the former list, was not required. A national Checklist should be a consensus of opinions of a Committee, not a one-man job. Had the Union's Checklist not appeared, there is little doubt that Mr. Mathews' list in many items would have differed. He was a member of the R.A.O.U. Checklist Committee (that was the point omitted by the reviewer), and kept in touch with its inner workings and several times modified his views to conform with those of the Committee. One instance may be cited. For the Flame Robin, Mr. Mathews adopted *Littlera chrysoptera* (his Checklist, 1913), but on the considered evidence of the whole committee he at once changed the specific name to *phœnicea*. There are also several instances where he raised his subspecies to a full species.

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The Sydney Congress.—The sessions of the annual Congress (1926) of the R.A.O.U. were the best ever held in the State, thanks to local members and the untiring energy of the Hon. State Secretary, Mr. N. W. Cayley. More time than usual was devoted to business—serious business—than to the pleasures, although the reception by the Deputy Lord Mayor was a happy and important beginning.

Members were made at home at the Australian Museum, where they were welcomed by Dr. Chas. Anderson on behalf of the trustees and the staff. Probably more time could have been devoted to the ornithological collections (notably the recently acquired "Robert Grant Collection"). The method of reference has been much improved by the card-index system, whereby any specimen required can be turned up with the least possible trouble. All exhibits were in first-class condition.

The all-day trip to the National Park under the leadership and hospitality of Mr. Frank Farnell (Chairman of the Trust) was a red-

letter day, both for enjoyment and instruction. A visiting member believed that one of the by-laws for regulating the Park needed amending, and should read :—" No person shall be allowed to hunt or disturb the native or introduced birds or animals in the park, *except domestic cats gone wild*." If native birds are to be adequately protected, no scheme anywhere will be complete without a war of extermination of wild domestic cats, which are now over-running reserved and open country alike.—A. J. CAMPBELL, Melbourne.

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Aviculture in Australia.—Mr. G. A. Heumann, R.A.O.U., Beecroft, Sydney, wrote to the annual Congress of the Union complaining that in N.S.W. *bona fide* aviculturists "are absolutely prevented by law from studying birds in confinement." Criticising "the fossilised official attitude," Mr. Heumann said: "I have a permit granted by the Administrator of the Northern Territory for some Finches and a few pair of Parrakeets. Some of these I wished to keep for observation and breeding purposes in my own aviaries; for a few others I have an export permit granted me by the Federal authorities on behalf of Lord Tavistock. Applying for a permit to land these birds in Sydney, to my utter surprise this was refused, and my representative was told if we attempted to land them, they would be seized by the police. All these birds may be landed in any other State, but the Zoological Gardens having wished at the time to create an exchange or trade monopoly for themselves, this astonishing, not to say stupid, regulation was formed. The last Darwin steamer brought a huge consignment of these birds to the Zoological Gardens here, and another big consignment to a private dealer in Melbourne; and yet here, in N.S.W., a private person cannot import one bird without making a criminal of himself. . . . I have bred in captivity most of the Australian Parrakeets and Finches—to mention amongst the rarer species Yellow-rump Finches, Princess Alexandra, Bourke, and Turquoise Parrots."