

following from Dr. Serventy's field notes—December 31, 1942 (Devil's Hole, Katoomba, N.S.W.): "The Brown Thornbill here carried its tail elevated so much that Gregory called out that it was a Blue Wren, mentioning the tail. I was at first inclined to think so too, till I put the glasses on it." March 11, 1943 (Fraser Island, Queensland): "At Ungowa . . . several Brown Thornbills, some of which held their tails cocked." Dr. Serventy agrees, however, that the habit is far more evident among birds in Western Australia than in the east.

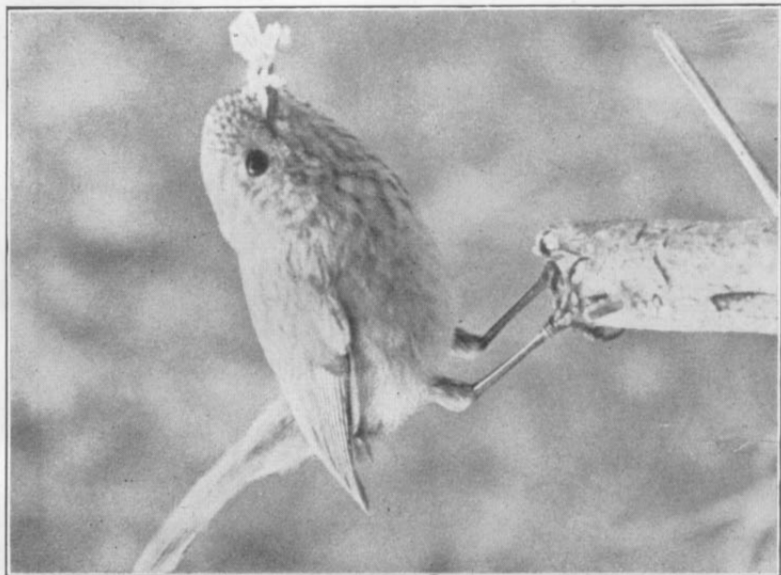
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## Obituary

ROBERT WILLIAM LEGGE

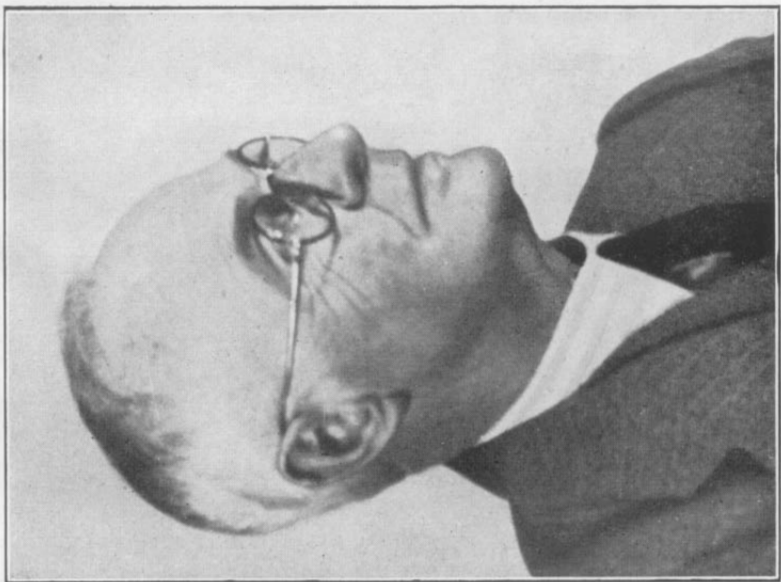
With the death of Robert William Legge, of Cullenswood, Tasmania has lost one of its outstanding birdmen. His name, familiar to readers of *The Emu*, will be associated in their minds with that of his father, Colonel W. Vincent Legge. The latter was through his long life passionately attached to the study of ornithology and it was while serving with his regiment at Trincomalee that he wrote his splendid treatise on *The Birds of Ceylon* (1880). It was here, too, that his son Robert was born, on December 16, 1874. Later, when his father needed his help at Cullenswood, Colonel Legge sent in his papers, and returned to Tasmania. When matters had been adjusted he accepted the appointment of Commandant of the Tasmanian military forces, a post he held for many years. His writings on the physiography of the island, especially of the Lake St. Clair and Ben Lomond areas, are authoritative, and his continued interest in ornithology was shown by a foundation membership of the R.A.O.U.

On the death of the Colonel in 1918, R. W. Legge took over 'Cullenswood,' the family estate, selected by his grandfather about 1830, and now passing to his son Arthur. Needless to say he continued in the membership of the R.A.O.U. Educated at the Hutchins School, Legge has told me that the greatest pleasures of his school life were the days spent on Mount Wellington and on holidays with such friends as the Kermodes on their estate of Mona Vale. It was on such occasions that his love of nature in its many aspects established itself. Destined for his father's regiment, he went to England in the 'eighties to sit for the entrance examinations for the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. The entries, however, were many and vacancies few, and, although he passed high in the list, he was not selected. So after experience on pastoral properties in the Riverina, he returned to Tasmania to manage 'Cullenswood.' Riding along his runs and by the Break o' Day



Broad-tailed Thornbill.

Photo. by S. White.



The late R. W. Legge.

Photo. by W. L. Crowther, Junr.

river, he developed, as his father had done, an intense interest in birds. He came to look for their nesting and comings and goings, and especially for such new species and occasional visitors that visited the district. He was devoted to an odd day's shooting along the river or among the marshes by the Moulting Lagoon and had a deep knowledge of the aquatic birds and migrants. So in several issues of *The Emu* there were to be found, in the Stray Feathers column, notes by him on birds and their ways. It was only isolation and his naturally-shy manner that prevented a closer association with the R.A.O.U. and its camps and other activities.

It is more than twenty years now, since kindred interests brought us together. He had, with his wife, commenced the study of the stone implements of the extinct Tasmanian aborigines. They collected over many East Coast camping grounds, some close to his home. Most interesting of all were those of the long stretch of the West Coast from the northern tip as far south as the Pieman river. Riding and camping with him was ideal. To a natural courtesy were added a delightful voice, and a merry laugh in keeping, and we had endless things to talk of as we jogged along. He knew all the birds, their notes and habits, and where to look for rare and unusual species. Of trees he had a similar knowledge, whether native or introduced. I remember well, one day, a deviation of several miles so that I might see a well-loved group of rare eucalypts that he had known of for years. He read widely and thought deeply and had written much that was new, on the implements of the Tasmanian natives. By collection and exchange, with Mrs. Legge's help, he had acquired a remarkable collection of stone artifacts, which they presented to the Victorian Museum at Launceston.

At Cullenswood on December 11, 1944, we bade farewell to him, in the church built and endowed by his grandfather and added to by his family. Each of the lovely stained-glass windows is inscribed to the memory of one of his relatives, including Henry Kingsley the author. Here it was his custom to come day by day and find strength and comfort, and, within a few feet of the seat he had occupied for so many years, we left him to his long rest.—W. L. CROWTHER.

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## Stray Feathers

**Bristle-bird at Cordeaux River.**—In view of the apparent rarity of the Eastern Bristle-bird (*Dasyornis brachypterus*), the finding of a bird I consider could be referable only to this species at Cordeaux river on December 31, 1944, may be worth recording. With two companions—Messrs. J. McNamara and B. Bresnahan—I had been in-