

TRUST ACCOUNT AS

LIABILITIES

Nil

Balance, being surplus of Assets over Liabilities ..	£1,075 14 6
	<u>£1,075 14 6</u>

The estimates of Assets set out on previous year's basis have been accepted by me; the bank pass books have been examined; the certificate of the Inscribed Stock registered in the name of the Union and in the names of the Trustees obtained from the Registrar of the Commonwealth Inscribed Stock have been received by me and are in agreement with the face value figures shown in Balance Sheet and Trust Account.

(Signed) HUGH C. E. STEWART.

A Feeding Habit of the Shrike-Tit.—A few years ago I obtained two seedlings of the argyle apple or blue peppermint (*Eucalyptus cinerea*) for my garden. This tree is not native to the Sydney district, though it occurs naturally on the tablelands of New South Wales. During late autumn and winter, from about May to August, the leaves of my two trees are infested with caterpillars of the moth *Mnesampela privata*. Soon after hatching the caterpillars form leaf-shelters at the extreme ends of the branchlets by drawing leaves together and webbing them with silk. There they rest during the day, and at night emerge to feed on the nearby leaves.

Shrike-Tits (*Falcunculus frontatus*) are very partial to the caterpillars and are often in the trees. They are adept at clinging to the slender, swaying branchlets, generally head downwards because of their weight, and prizing open the webbed shelters. A bird will extract one of the larger caterpillars with its powerful bill; it will then fly to a more stable perch, hold the grub against the branch with one foot, straighten it out, break the skin behind the head and extract the alimentary canal or digestive tube, which usually comes away entire. This part is discarded and the rest of the caterpillar is then eaten. I have frequently watched the birds from a distance of a few feet and on several occasions have collected the discarded tracts; these have been found to be filled with partially digested leaf tissue and excreta, having a pronounced smell of eucalyptus oil.

Obviously the Shrike-Tits are fastidious in their feeding habits. Their actions in extracting and discarding that part of the caterpillar containing the strong-smelling leaf tissue, of little or no food value to them and which may be injurious to their health, seems to indicate a high degree of avian intelligence: it could scarcely be called instinct.

AT JUNE 30, 1946

ASSETS

Commonwealth Government Inscribed Stock (face value)	£1,070	0	0
Balance in State Savings Bank		5	14 6
		£1,075	14 6

(Signed) A. S. CHALK,

Hon. Treasurer.

Audited and found correct,

(Signed) HUGH C. E. STEWART,

Hon. Auditor.

The leaves of *Eucalyptus cinerea* have been distilled extensively on a commercial scale. The essential oil is rich in cineol (or eucalyptol), a constituent of eucalyptus oils. Doubtless the oil content of the leaves is distasteful to the birds and they have learned by experience to remove expertly the alimentary canal before eating the caterpillar. A caterpillar collected for determination pupated in June 1945. The pupa hatched early in April 1946, some nine months later.

In a previous note (*The Emu*, 42, 1943, p. 181) mention was made of the discrimination shown by Shrike-Tits when eating cicadas. Therein it was recorded that the birds, after eating the viscera, discarded the rest of the insect.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Lane Cove, Sydney, N.S.W., 12/8/46.

'Whisper-song' of Rufous Whistler. — Whisper-song — that subdued, airy melody-making indulged in, it would seem, by many species — has always intrigued me, possibly because of the fact that, if it were a human practice, it would surely betoken a state of utter content.

Dawn of July 24, 1943, found me in open forest a few miles north of Cairns, with a most unpleasant immediate future facing me. At 6.30 a.m. a fine male Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) flew into a low bush a few feet from where I sat, and after preening his feathers for some minutes, broke into his whisper song. I listened with mixed feelings.

It was a most intense performance. He elevated his head-feathers into a cone, partly raised and spread his tail, and bobbed up and down on his perch. The song was very soft, audible no further than five yards away, rather cricket-like in tone and timbre, but punctuated with sharp, yet still soft, 'e-chong' notes. — P. A. BOURKE, Wallsend, N.S.W., 17/4/46.