

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE next annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held in Quebec, Oct. 17-20, 1932. The headquarters will be at the Chateau Frontenac and the public sessions, beginning on Tuesday, will be held in Laval University. The local Committee on Arrangements has already made preparations for a meeting which promises to be one of the most notable ever held by the Union. One of the sessions probably on Wednesday afternoon will be conducted in French for the benefit of French Canadian naturalists and visitors. A regular session in English will be arranged at the same time for the benefit of those who are not familiar with French. The annual dinner will be held on Wednesday evening and the excursion on Friday, Oct. 21, will be made by motor bus to Cap Tourmente, about 35 miles from Quebec, to see flocks of the Greater Snow Goose. Arrangements will also be made for those who arrive before the meeting to visit points of interest in and about Quebec.

Titles of papers for the program should be sent to the Secretary not later than Sept. 15, and each title should be accompanied by a brief abstract of not more than 200 words outlining the principal points in the paper. It is possible that arrangements may be made to issue these abstracts in French, and ample time should be allowed for translation and publication of the abstracts.

The Chairman of the Local Committee is Reginald Meredith, who is also Secretary of the Provancher Society of Natural History, 46 Dalhousie Street, Quebec, from whom further details in regard to arrangements may be obtained. His associates are Adrian Falardeau, L. A. Richard, G. S. Ahern, D. A. Déry, G. A. Langelier and Harrison F. Lewis.

THE practice of charging part of the expenses of the last issue of 'The Auk' to the next year, coupled with decrease in income, has produced a condition which necessitated a "balancing of the budget" this year, in order to get back to normal conditions. It has therefore been necessary, much to our regret, to omit, for 1932, the list of members usually published in the April number which has grown to be an expensive item, and to somewhat reduce the size of the number. Thanks to the generosity of authors of certain papers in this and the following numbers, who have paid for the printing of their contributions, the reduction will not be as great as was feared. The situation which the Publication Committee has to face, at present, and the continual demand for the publication of additional papers, for which we lack funds, emphasizes once more the need of an endowment as voiced by President Grinnell in the January 'Auk' (p. 142). Owing to the constantly increasing number of publications on birds we shall from now on review at length only the more outstanding books and papers and comment on others in the list entitled "Shorter Papers," with which has been

combined the list formerly appearing as "Ornithological Papers in Other Journals." The officers of the Union which are usually printed at the beginning of the list of members will be found on the third page of the cover, while the Council and most of the Committees remain the same as last year with the exception of those on 'Arrangements for the Annual Meeting' and on 'Classification and Nomenclature.' The former is given above in connection with the announcement of the Quebec Meeting, while Dr. Alexander Wetmore is chairman of the latter with power to select his associates. Mr. W. E. Saunders has also replaced Mr. S. G. Jewett on the Committee on 'Bird Protection.'

It is with regret that we again refer to the poisoning of wild life in the western states, which was discussed in the July 1931 issue of 'The Auk,' but in all fairness, we feel that attention should be called to a pamphlet on 'The California Ground Squirrel Program' by Eugene S. Kellogg, County Agriculture Commissioner for Santa Barbara County, in which it is stated that the article by Dr. Linsdale in 'The Condor' and Dr. Grinnell's editorial quoted by us, "is [= are] replete with misleading information and contains [contain] very few facts concerning the use of thallium." We should, of course, have given the pamphlet full notice even without the request of the Chief of the Biological Survey, for whom we have the highest regard, that it be given its just due of publicity in 'The Auk.' The Survey, it is stated, coöperated in gathering the data contained in the report, as it has done in the poison work.

The pamphlet has apparently been given wide circulation among the members of the A. O. U. and by comparing it with the Linsdale article they can form their own opinion of the diversity of statements.

Mr. Kellogg in the first place emphasizes the necessity for rodent *control* upon which we think everyone is agreed. Then there follow excerpts from "signed statements" of 258 persons, all apparently representatives of county or state agricultural commissions or of the Biological Survey, regarding the value of rodent control, diminution of the squirrels, and the effect of poison on other forms of life. The summary of these replies is mainly confined to the comparative merits of thallium and strychnine in poisoning work and several of the cases cited by Dr. Linsdale are stated to be due to the latter and not to thallium. On the merits of thallium, however, there seems to be much difference of opinion. On page 11 we read that 227 of the 258 who returned reports consider thallium from 50% to 500% superior to strychnine while the author states on p. 5 that thallium is, "must [= much] less poisonous weight for weight, than strychnine" yet he further explains that it is used as a "supplementary material" by the use of which "the sooner will we accomplish our peak effort in ground squirrel control and get on to a basis of minimum annual poison exposure."

As to the poisoning of birds or mammals other than ground squirrels it is stated that "the ability of those responding, to recall having seen specific numbers was taxed." "Out of the 258 reporting, 142 found absolutely no

birds or animals dead other than squirrels." One man estimated "1000 dead doves from thallium over the last six years" but the author claims that this man only used thallium for one year and "this loss could not have been from thallium. Doves are rarely killed by thallium grain." The author concludes that "while it is undoubtedly true that occasional birds are poisoned there is no evidence that there has been any serious loss."

Much space is also given to explaining certain deaths alleged to be due to poison and to contradicting some of the statements made in the 'Condor' articles but as a matter of fact few of Dr. Linsdale's figures are disproved. Indeed this would seem from the nature of the case to be difficult no matter how severely the memory of the reporters was "taxed." Furthermore, land owners suffering from squirrels or agents engaged in their destruction with but little interest in birds will differ materially in their conclusions, from ornithologists whose main interest is the conservation of wild life; what one group sees the other will in all probability miss. However both sides of the controversy have published their findings and our readers may compare them.

As a matter of fact our main contention is not affected by this pamphlet nor does it make any difference whether strychnine or thallium is the poison used. We still feel that it is most unfortunate that the Biological Survey, originally dedicated to conservation, has to take such a prominent part in this wretched business of poisoning which should be left to the states in which control is necessary. We are beginning to fear, however, that the Survey is really not a free agent in the matter, and, in order to maintain its splendid work in other lines, is compelled to carry on this poison campaign. Dr. C. Hart Merriam, organizer and former chief of the Survey makes some pertinent remarks in a letter published with his permission in the 'Journal of Mammalogy' for February last, p. 97. He says: "The difference between the Biological Survey men and most Naturalists outside the Survey strikes me as one of *degree*. Most of us believe that in certain places and at certain times it is highly desirable to destroy harmful animals, but when it comes to employing upward of *three hundred men* to distribute poisons broadcast over vast areas, I must confess that my sympathy is with the animals. . . . As I look at the matter, the fight is between the stock men, who have *enormous* influence in Congress, and the rest of us, who have *no influence at all*."

"Just why the government should force *all* the states to pay the cost of poisoning alleged injurious animals in *one third of the States* is beyond my comprehension.

"I have long felt that this is a *State* affair and that such trapping and poisoning as may be necessary should be paid for by the *States concerned* and not by the United States as a whole."

If the status of the matter is as stated by Dr. Merriam, and surely no one is better qualified to know, our sympathy goes out to the officers and staff of the Survey whose splendid work in other lines has always gained the sin-

cere admiration of the ornithologists of America. Dr. Merriam's last paragraphs are exactly in accord with our contention as stated in the July 'Auk' and it would seem that the only method of approach is to take the matter up with our congressmen and try to relieve the Survey of a burden which must be intolerable to sincere conservationists such as its staff have always been.

Ornithologists and nature lovers will never endorse 'control' that is practically synonymous with extermination, which seems to be what the stock men and ranchers of the West desire but opposition to such practices does not, under the circumstances, mean opposition to our friends on the Biological Survey.

ON FEBRUARY 9, 1932, Dr. J. B. Steere, Professor of Zoology in the University of Michigan from 1879 to 1893, celebrated his ninetieth birthday, being the second American ornithologist to reach that advanced age; Mr. Otto Widmann who was ninety on June 15 last, was the other. Prof. Steere's name will ever be associated with the ornithology of the Philippines. His explorations of the islands in 1874 yielded a number of forms hitherto unknown from there including about forty new to science which were described by Bowdler Sharpe while Dr. Steere himself described fifty-three more novelties obtained on the Steere expedition of 1887-88, which obtained a series of 5000 specimens from seventeen different islands. Dr. Steere's most important paper was his 'Distribution of Land Birds in the Philippines' which was read at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Indianapolis in 1890 and late published in 'The Auk' (1894, pp. 231-240).

We feel that all American ornithologists will join us in congratulating Dr. Steere upon the occasion of his notable birthday.

DURING THE latter part of 1931 an effort was made to save the Audubon residence known as "Minniesland" situated on Riverside Drive between 155th and 156th Sts., New York City, from destruction by a committee of interested persons but failing to secure the funds necessary for its removal the attempt was abandoned. At the last moment, however, when part of the building (fortunately not the original portion) was actually being demolished, Mr. Harold K. Decker of 1848 Washington Ave., New York, arranged to acquire the building from the wreckers and obtain their co-operation in its removal to a new site on city-owned property at 161st St. Those in charge of the matter have organized as The Audubon Home, Inc., with many well known ornithologists on their Board and with the endorsement of the National Association of Audubon Societies, the American Museum, etc. They now appeal for financial assistance to carry out the plans and subscriptions may be sent to the first named society at 1775 Broadway, New York City.

THE PROPOSED Tropical Everglades National Park has been enthusiastically endorsed by the trustees of the National Parks Association and

everyone interested in preserving this, the only bit of tropical fauna and flora within the boundaries of the United States, should support the undertaking by writing their congressmen and senators to support bill S. 475 and H. 5063. The importance of prompt action cannot be too strongly urged.

THE WELL-KNOWN Jack Miner Sanctuary has been incorporated under the title of "The Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation, Inc.," in accordance with the laws of Michigan, with Jack Miner, Laona Miner, and Manly Forest Miner as Trustees and the Union Guardian Trust Co., of Detroit, Mich., depository of the funds.

The object of the corporation is to develop and insure the permanence of the work hitherto carried on at the sanctuary at Kingsville, Ontario, in feeding, protecting, and banding Canada Geese and other birds. The actual work of maintaining the sanctuary will be continued by the Trustees with the assistance of an Advisory Board of 75 members.

An attractive prospectus has been issued containing, in addition to general information, a list of all the places arranged, by States and Provinces, where 914 of the 4,400 Canada Geese banded at Kingsville, between 1915 and Jan. 1, 1931, have been reported. Copies of the prospectus and information regarding the Foundation may be obtained from the Secretary, Manly F. Miner, Kingsville, Ontario.

MR. ERNEST G. HOLT, well known for his ornithological work, has been appointed Director of Sanctuaries by the National Association of Audubon Societies.

THE TENTH annual meeting of the Inland Bird Banding Association was held in Chicago on November 27-28, 1931. An interesting program was presented, some of the papers appearing in the 'Inland Bird Banding News,' (a mimeographed journal issued by the society) for December, 1931. W. I. Lyon was elected president, M. J. Magee, treasurer and Edw. R. Ford, treasurer; with S. Prentiss Baldwin, as honorary president.

THE FORTY-THIRD annual meeting of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club was held at the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia on January 7, 1932. Officers for the ensuing year are: President, Dr. Samuel C. Palmer; Vice-president, Julian K. Potter; Treasurer, Henry T. Underdown; Secretary, John A. Gillespie, Glenolden, Pa. Since the meeting an issue of the Club's publication 'Cassinia' has been published covering the years 1929 and 1930, and making the twenty-eighth number of this journal including the four 'Abstracts of Proceedings,' 1892, 1898, 1900 and 1901.

A LIST of libraries, public and private, which need some of the rare, early volumes of 'The Auk' is maintained by the Union. Persons who have extra copies of any of the first six volumes, 1884 to 1889, or any numbers of these volumes which they wish to dispose of, are requested to communicate with the Secretary.