

NOTES AND NEWS.

WE have again to thank several authors of papers who have paid in whole or in part for the publication of their papers and thus helped us to "balance a budget" without seriously reducing the size of 'The Auk', but it has been necessary to cut down the space devoted both to "General Notes" and "Recent Literature." In the former we have published only such notes as reached us prior to May 20 (instead of June 1 as usual) and in the latter to review in detail only some of the larger or more important books and papers treating the others under "Shorter Papers." We trust that we may be able to bring "General Notes" up to date in the October issue and that authors of some of the papers will understand the reason for the abbreviated reviews.

IN THE May-June issue of 'Bird-Lore' we find an illuminating correspondence between Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audubon Societies and Mr. Paul G. Reddington, Chief of the Biological Survey, and the reaction of the former to the poison policy of the Survey. In this Dr. Pearson states that Congress directs the Department of Agriculture, through the Biological Survey, to engage in control measures but the Survey adopts its own methods in carrying out the general instructions and it is clearly within its jurisdiction to determine whether poison shall be used. He says: "From Mr. Reddington's letter we find with extreme regret that our appeals and those of others have had little effect on the Survey regarding poisoning operations. His statement that the Survey 'will continue to use poisons' shows that it is committed to a policy almost universally condemned by conservationists."

It appears from Dr. Pearson's statement that the Biological Survey appropriation passed by the House for 1933 allocates \$829,697 for conservation and \$573,780 for "control"; a reduction of over \$400,000 in the former item and only \$17,000 in the latter, from the 1932 appropriation; which is pretty clear evidence of Congress's idea that the province of the Survey is not primarily the *preservation* of wild life.

Dr. Pearson concludes: "While we appreciate the incalculable contributions of the Biological Survey to many phases of conservation, in this particular instance we are squarely opposed to its policy and shall use such means as are at our disposal to combat this practice. We call upon the people of the country, especially those residing in the Western States to unite their influence with ours in seeking to induce Federal, State, and local agencies to discontinue the general use of poisons in pest-control measures. Also we shall urge that appropriations for any such work shall be made only with the stipulated understanding that no part of such funds shall be used in the purchase or distribution of poisons." The "means" at Dr. Pearson's disposal are very considerable and by provoking the opposi-

tion of the National Association, in addition to that of the American Society of Mammalogists and other conservation organizations the Survey would appear to be placing itself in a most unfortunate position. A resolution protesting against the use of poison in control work was, we understand, presented at the last meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union and referred to the Committee on Bird Protection which will be expected to present a report for action at the meeting in October.

THE purchase of the famous Tring collection of birds for the American Museum of Natural History has already been noticed in the public press¹ and at our request Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy, who took care of the cataloguing and shipment, has prepared the following account of the collection for 'The Auk.' As Dr. Murphy says, while American ornithologists will welcome the acquisition of this collection, they cannot but sympathize with their co-workers in England on conditions which made its sale necessary.

In October, 1931, Lord Rothschild wrote Dr. Leonard C. Sanford, a trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, saying that he had reluctantly determined to offer for sale the greater part of his renowned collection of birds. Through the generosity of a patron, ownership of this great ornithological treasure was formally transferred to the American Museum on February 13, 1932.

The agreement called for the delivery of all birds belonging to Lord Rothschild with the exception of the mounted collection on exhibition in the public halls of his museum, the series of struthious or ostrich-like birds, and a small number of duplicate specimens, representing various families, which Lord Rothschild wished to retain chiefly because the species were not otherwise represented in Great Britain.

No general catalogue of the Tring Collection had ever been prepared, and the exact number of specimens destined for the American Museum was unknown until a four months' task of inspection and listing was completed, in May, when the total proved to be slightly under 280,000. Shipment of the material to New York was made in six consignments, the last of 185 wooden cases reaching the American Museum early in June. Unpacking will not be begun until the Whitney Memorial wing of the Museum, the new home of the Department of Birds, is finished and equipped for arrangement and storage of the specimens.

¹ Recent articles relating to the Tring Collection, and to its transfer to New York, are the following:

Hartert, Ernst, 1931, *Das Tringmuseum und seine Entwicklung*. *Journal für Ornithologie*, LXXX, pp. 140-143.

Anonymous, 1932. *A Great Bird Collection for America*. *The Field*, Mar. 26, p. 445.

Stresemann, E., 1932. *Die Vogelsammlung des Tring-Museums, ihr Aufbau und ihr Ende*. *Ornithologische Monatsberichte*, May, pp. 65-73.

Witherby, H. F., 1932. *The Tring Collection of Birds*. *British Birds*, XXVI, pp. 17-21.

The development of the Zoological Museum at Tring during a single lifetime is a great monument to the zeal and munificence of Lord Rothschild, and to the wisdom with which he chose his collaborators. Construction of the present group of buildings was begun about 1890, many distinguished British scientific men contributing their counsel as to the plan and aim of the institution. In 1892 Dr. Ernst Hartert was appointed Director, a post from which he has only recently retired, and in 1893 Dr. Karl Jordan became head of the department of insects, which, like that of birds, has grown to be one of the most important centers of activity in taxonomic and biological science.

Of the entomological division, and of the collections and publications relating to reptiles, mammals and other vertebrates, we need not speak here. A good proportion of Lord Rothschild's many-sided interest in natural history has always been devoted to ornithology and, in team work with Dr. Hartert, he has built up the amazingly rich and useful collection of birds which has finally passed to the American Museum.

During the first period of rapid growth, the Tring Museum was enlarged by the acquisition of important private collections, particularly such as had been fully studied and reported upon. Buller's New Zealand birds, the Galapagos collections of Baur, the Emin Pasha African collection, and the famous Brehm collection, which includes 371 types, mostly of European birds, are examples of many such additions. The policy has indeed been maintained up to the present date, as witnessed by the recent purchase of approximately 50,000 Australian specimens which had formed the basis for the monograph by Mathews. These facts, together with the speed with which new material has always been studied in Tring, and as promptly reported upon in Lord Rothschild's scientific journal, 'Novitates Zoologicae,' are among the reasons why the collection is so valuable to students. It is the most-studied of all bird collections, and a list of those who have pursued researches at Tring would be in large measure a roster of the foremost ornithologists of our time. The collection may be said to represent the substance of an ornithological library because it is so rich in types and historic examples upon which discussions have been based and important conclusions reached.

Lord Rothschild has always had a deep interest in rare and disappearing creatures, and he has shown keen foresight in acquiring material from islands and other regions in which modern changes were likely to bring about extinction. This explains the presence in the Tring collection of the irreplaceable series of birds from the Galapagos, Hawaii, etc. Equally important among his ideals was the systematic exploration of ornithologically little known countries, such as Formosa, Hainan, the Papuan region, and many parts of Africa. It would, however, be misleading to cite even large numbers of such scattered localities, for above all else, Tring has built up a World Collection in the fullest sense. Dr. Hartert was naturally interested in perfecting the representation of birds of the Palaearctic region, a goal which has been approached more closely than

by any other institution. He and Lord Rothschild made a number of highly profitable journeys to different areas in North Africa, and by field work, purchase, and exchange a vast collection, covering all of the northern part of the Old World, was eventually brought together.

The manner in which the Tring material supplements the former collection of the American Museum is most remarkable. We already had an excellent representation of North and South American birds, of the fauna of forested Africa (i. e., the Congo basin), of Polynesia and of certain other islands and oceanic areas. Through acquisition of the Tring collection we add the birds of Europe, Asia and North Africa, those of East and South Africa, the Indo-Malayan and Melanesian districts, Australia and New Zealand, together with a large proportion of extinct or nearly extinct species from many localities, not to mention the very valuable hybrids and aberrant forms of many families, in which Lord Rothschild has always taken a special interest.

The Tring Collection contains several genera of birds not, up to the present, represented in the American Museum; it contains also a relative wealth of species known from unique specimens. Type specimens number in the neighborhood of three thousand. The total number of genera, as listed in the recent manuscript catalogue, run to about twenty-five hundred but, since Dr. Hartert has always given generic names a very comprehensive application, the actual representation of genera, as they are described and used in ornithological literature, is very much larger.

Aside from the rarities and historic specimens, which have a special appeal, the greatest resource which the Tring Collection offers to ornithology in America lies probably in the satisfying series of entire Old World families and lesser groups. It will now be possible for the student to examine nearly all the known forms of parrots, rails, birds of paradise, sunbirds, babblers, and many other aggregations, without crossing the Atlantic. Likewise, it will become peculiarly illuminating, even to the best informed ornithologists, to be able to compare their series of familiar North American races with the representative Palearctic forms in equally adequate series. It imparts a new meaning to the subjects of evolution and geographic distribution to see upon one table the evidence that our own very *species* of nuthatches, horned larks, titmice, finches, etc., occur also in parts of Europe and Asia, in the north African deserts, or upon Mediterranean islands.

It must not be forgotten that as we in America have gained, so European ornithologists have lost the ready use of an important tool of their craft. The hospitality and liberality of Tring have become proverbial. It is the hope of the American Museum of Natural History that the effect of this deprivation may be ameliorated in so far as possible. Not only are facilities in preparation for guest-workers but, moreover, every effort will be made to further the investigations of such as must continue the bulk of their labors at home.—R. C. M.

THE Tenth Annual Meeting of the Baird Ornithological Club was held on the evening of March 23, 1932, at the home of Henry C. Fuller, Chevy Chase, D. C., with President E. R. Kalmbach in the Chair and twelve other members present.

Following a short address by the President, the Club elected the following officers for the ensuing fiscal year: President, Dr. T. S. Palmer; Vice President, Dr. Paul Bartsch; Secretary, Frederick C. Lincoln; Council, Dr. C. W. Richmond and A. H. Howell.

Mrs. Bradshaw H. Swales, widow of the founder, and first secretary (later president) of the Club, was elected to Honorary Membership, being the first lady to be accorded this distinction.—F. C. L.

THE 50th Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held in Quebec, October 17-20, 1932. The Local Committee in Charge of Arrangements is preparing an exhibit of bird paintings and photographs in connection with the meeting to which all persons, whether members of the Union or not, are invited to contribute. Those who have original paintings or photographs suitable for exhibition are requested to communicate with the chairman, Mr. Reginald Meredith, 45 Dalhousie St., Quebec, in regard to details of the exhibit, and when shipping pictures should advise him as to the value to be placed on them for purposes of insurance. All exhibits should reach Quebec not later than the first week in October, should be addressed to the Provancher Society, Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, Que., and should be marked "A. O. U. Exhibit." The Local Committee will pay insurance on the pictures from the time they reach Quebec until they are returned to their owners and will also bear the cost of repacking and returning them.

Members who expect to contribute papers to the program should send the titles to the Secretary of the Union, 1939 Biltmore St., Washington, D. C., not later than *September 15*, and should submit with each title an abstract of not more than 200 words. More time than usual will be required for printing the program this year and it is important that all material should be in the hands of the Committee well in advance of the meeting.—T. S. P.