

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

BY T. S. PALMER.

TEN years ago the present incumbent was elected Secretary of the Union and it is fitting on this occasion to mention some of the more important events which have occurred during the past decade. In spite of the fact that we have passed through the great war, an epidemic of the 'flu' and a period of financial depression, the Union has practically doubled its membership, and has extended its influence without raising its dues. Meetings have been held in three new places, and with the cordial cooperation of Canadian members the first international meeting held in 1926 was a great success. Unlike our Australian confreres, who have successfully completed their Check List, we have not yet published the new edition of the 'Check List of North American Birds' although the work of preparation is well under way. The 'Ten Year Index of The Auk' has not yet been issued but is now ready for the printer, although some months must still elapse before it will be issued. The 'Index of Portraits of Ornithologists' which was authorized some time ago by the Council has not yet been completed.

Membership.—The present membership shows a total of 63 less than the number reported last year due to the rigid pruning to which the list was subjected last spring. The members are distributed in all the States and Territories (except Hawaii), the Phillippines, and in a number of foreign countries and colonies on all of the continents, and in the West Indies.

The following tabular statement shows the figures for the present membership in comparison with those of 10 years ago and last year:

	<i>Fellows</i>	<i>Retired Fellows</i>	<i>Hon. Fellows</i>	<i>Corresponding Fellows</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Associates</i>	<i>Total</i>
1917	49	3	14	59	77	689	891
1926	50	5	23	86	99	1552	1815
1927	49	5	23	92	103	1500	1752

A comparison with 1917 shows that the membership has practically doubled during the last decade, notwithstanding the slight

decrease during the present year. At the last meeting 9 Corresponding Fellows and 154 Associates were elected and during the year the number was still further increased by the restoration of 3 Associates. Notwithstanding these additions the increase was more than offset by the loss of 19 Members by death, 38 by resignation, others by failure to qualify and by delinquency. The losses by death including those of 1 Fellow, 2 Corresponding Fellows, 1 Member and 15 Associates were marked by two tragedies: The death of Miss Mary Stella Clarke, an Associate who wandered out on the beach at Cape May, New Jersey, on the stormy night of January 15 and met a tragic death, and Louis Agassiz Fuertes who was killed in an automobile accident at a railway crossing near Unadilla, New York, on August 22. In the classes of restricted membership we now have one vacancy in the class of Fellows, two in that of Honorary Fellows, eight in that of Corresponding Fellows, and twenty-two in that of Members.

Activities of Members Abroad.—During the year the Treasurer has visited a number of museums in the capitals of Europe and met some of our foreign members, while the Secretary visited the west coast and several provinces of Canada, attended meetings of the two sections of the Cooper Ornithological Club, conferred with a number of members in the northwest and visited seven or eight museums. In the field many members have been active. In tropical America the President collected in San Domingo and during a two months trip secured many specimens and data of importance, while S. T. Danforth and J. T. Emlen, Jr. collected on the same island and James Bond in several of the Lesser Antilles. Harry Malleis is still in Guatemala and A. J. Van Rossem who has been working for several years in Salvador has recently returned from another successful trip. Austin Paul Smith has again taken up his residence at San Jose, Costa Rica, and A. W. Anthony has been collecting in Guatemala for Dr. Dwight. Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow Griscom visited Panama and the Canal Zone, and the station at Barro Colorado has been visited during the year by Dr. Thomas Barbour, Dr. F. M. Chapman, Dr. A. O. Gross and Josselyn Van Tyne, all of whom spent some time in various investigations.

In South America the most important expedition was probably

that known as the Captain Marshall Field Brazilian Expedition which has recently returned with some 4,000 zoological specimens. George K. Cherrie the veteran collector and field naturalist was a member of this expedition. Colin C. Sanborn also of the Field Museum has recently returned from Uruguay where he obtained exhibit material and a small collection of birds. In Ecuador, R. T. Moore has devoted especial attention to Hummingbirds and has brought back a collection containing valuable material representing this group. Dr. and Mrs. Gross and Mrs. E. K. Frey also made a trip to Ecuador, visiting Guayaquil and Quito and reached a point in the Andes above 15,000 feet.

As usual several members visited Europe. The Treasurer during two months spent abroad visited a number of museums in England, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Finland and Sweden. Mrs. W. W. Naumburg spent some time in work in museums in England and on the continent and Dr. Charles W. Townsend and Dr. Casey A. Wood returning from their extended trips around the world spent some time in England.

On the continent of Asia Dr. Hugh M. Smith, Director of fisheries work in Siam, has made some valuable collections of birds for the U. S. National Museum. M. Delacour has recently returned to Indo-China to continue the work which he has so successfully carried on in that little known region during the past three or four years.

Africa has perhaps been the scene of greatest recent activity of American ornithologists in foreign countries. The Field Museum of Natural History has had two important expeditions in the eastern and southern parts of the continent. The Abyssinian Expedition under the direction of Dr. W. H. Osgood who was accompanied by Messrs. L. A. Fuertes and A. M. Bailey has recently returned laden with valuable collections from an almost unknown region. Messrs. H. B. Conover and J. T. Zimmer were also successful in their quest for material in Tanganyika and the eastern part of the Belgian Congo.

The American Museum has been ably represented in the Congo region by J. P. Chapin who has recently returned from the Mt. Ruwenzori region with valuable material and information, while Herbert Lang who has been collecting in South Africa for several years is still absent in that region.

Last spring Dr. Charles W. Townsend and Mr. H. B. Skeele happened to meet in Egypt and took a trip together up the Nile. A former Associate, Mrs. Adele Lewis Grant is now located at Wellington, Cape Province, and while primarily engaged in botanical work in the University of South Africa still maintains her interest in birds.

The Whitney South Sea Expedition of the American Museum is still actively at work in the South Pacific under the direction of Rollo Beck who continues to add to his rich collections of rare species from a little known region. He has recently sent in a shipment of several thousand bird skins and many bird skeletons, nests and eggs from the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides. In this connection reference should also be made to another globe circuit made by Mrs. Harriet W. Myers who started westward from California in November 1926. Since her return she has published a brief summary of her observations made during the four months' trip.

Biography and Bibliography.—The Committee on Biography and Bibliography has carried on a variety of activities during the year. Assistance has been rendered to the Editor in proof reading on 'The Auk,' and the work of obtaining biographical data and preparing obituary notices of deceased members has been continued. Notices have now been published for all of the foreign members who died previous to the beginning of the year 1927.

In the effort to keep in touch with foreign ornithological organizations, data have been secured regarding the Siberian Ornithological Society which was organized in Tomsk, Siberia, in 1918. This organization has been functioning for 9 years but apparently its work is little known to most of our members. In 1926 it began the publication of a journal known as 'Uragus,' of which several numbers have thus far appeared. Copies of this journal are now regularly received by the library of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and should be in a number of other public and private libraries.

Through cooperation with several local organizations in California the grave of Thomas Bridges, the first resident California ornithologist, which had remained unmarked for a number of years, has been marked with a small stone bearing a suitable

inscription. The tombstone of James Hepburn, one of the early West Coast collectors and the discoverer of Hepburn's Rosy Finch, has been located in Quadra Street Cemetery in Victoria, B. C.

Museum Collections.—The Committee on Biography and Bibliography has also continued to accumulate information regarding some of the more important public and private bird collections in this country and abroad, in order to have available for those who may be interested, basic facts regarding the more important ornithological collections. There is great need of some brief but comprehensive summary of information regarding the more important collections in this country and abroad which should be available to students and general readers.

Reference has several times been made in previous reports to the genera of birds of the world (included in Sharpe's 'Hand List') which are still unrepresented in American museums. Through the activity of several institutions, particularly of the American Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Comparative Zoology, the list of desiderata in these collections has recently been considerably reduced with the result that the total number of genera still unrepresented in American museums has now been reduced to 57. A list of these genera is practically ready for publication.

Papers of the Ottawa Meeting.—More papers than usual presented at the last annual meeting have appeared in print. No less than 17 of the 57 have thus far been published—7 in 'The Auk' and at least 10 elsewhere. Those which appeared in 'The Auk' include the following:

No. 1. Townsend's 'Notes on the Courtship of the Lesser Scaup, Everglade Kite, Crow and Boat tailed and Great tailed Grackles.'

No. 7. Young's 'Visit to the Queen Charlotte Islands.'

No. 10. Boulton's Nestling Plumage of the House Wren, under the title 'Ptilosis of the House Wren.'

No. 11. Kendeigh's 'House Wren On and Off Duty.'

No. 16. Bergtold's 'Sparrow Hawks of Colorado.'

No. 28. Wetmore's 'Present Status of the Fossil Bird List of North America.'

No. 41. Bowles and Decker's paper on Flycatchers under the title 'A Comparative Field Study of Wright's and Hammond's Flycatchers.'

The papers published elsewhere include:

No. 3. Harrison Lewis' contribution on Eider Down under the title 'Producing Eider Down,' in the 'Canadian Field Naturalist,' Feb. 1927.

No. 4. Grinnell's 'Tree Surgery and the Birds,' in the 'University of California Chronicle,' Jan. 1927, pp. 104-106.

No. 5. Alexander's, 'Decorations of the Bowers of Australian Bower-Birds,' in 'Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club,' XLVII, pp. 80-82, Feb. 27, 1927 (abstract).

No. 19. Grinnell's 'Critical Factor in the Existence of Southwestern Game Birds,' in Science,' LXV, pp. 528-529, May 27, 1927.

No. 20. W. P. Smith's 'Tree Sparrow Returns and Migration,' in 'Bull. N. E. Bird Banding Assn.,' III, pp. 5-7, Jan. 1927.

No. 24. McAtee's 'Averages are Fundamental in Economic Ornithology,' in 'Bird Lore,' XXIX, pp. 97-99, April, 1927.

No. 32. Gromme's pictures of the 'Nesting Life of the Loon in Wisconsin,' in 'Yearbook of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee' for 1925, Vol. V, pp. 59-60, figs. 86-89, March 10, 1927.

No. 37. Simmons' 'Blossom South Atlantic Expedition' under the title 'Sindbads of Science,' in the 'National Geographic Magazine,' July, 1927, pp. 1-75, 87 illustrations.

No. 53. Todd's 'Hudson Bay Expedition' under the title 'The John B. Semple Expedition,' in 'The Cardinal,' II, pp. 6-10, Jan., 1927.

No. 54. Griscom's 'Ornithological Results of the Mason-Spinden Expedition to eastern Yucatan and Cozumel Island,' in 'American Museum Novitates,' No. 235, pp. 1-19, No. 236, pp. 1-13.

Looking Forward.—The Union at present is in a transition stage. In the early days when the sessions were entirely devoted to business and later with the introduction of programs devoted chiefly to papers on distribution and systematic work or reports on field expeditions, it was comparatively easy to arrange the programs, provide ample time for discussion, and transact the necessary business. With the increase in membership to nearly 2000, interests of the members have multiplied and become more diversified.

More contributions are now offered for the program of an annual meeting than can properly be presented and new conditions present several problems difficult of solution. While this active interest on the part of members is very encouraging it brings up questions which require careful consideration.

The annual meeting is the clearing house of the Union which affords an opportunity for personal contact and conference, comparison of specimens, consultation of books and manuscripts, comparing notes on previous work and planning trips for the future. To insure better attendance it is highly desirable that the membership of the Union be increased at least to 2500, not merely for the sake of larger numbers but to secure reduced railroad rates which may be had with an attendance of 250 at the meetings. This means much to members who come from a distance. The arrangement of the program to secure the greatest economy of time and effort is a problem for the members. Double sessions are objectionable but unavoidable if the program is long. Whether to shorten the time or restrict the subjects are matters for careful consideration. Discussion is one of the objects of the public presentation of papers but the direction of discussion and the preservation of the results are difficult matters to handle. Finally, the question of whether the Union should provide regional meetings to keep closer in touch with its membership in distant States, and whether the annual meetings should be conducted on the fee system instead of the system thus far followed must be decided in the near future if the range of meeting places is to be extended much farther.

DECEASED MEMBERS, 1926-1927.

LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES,¹ Fellow, aged 53, killed in an automobile accident near Unadilla, N. Y., Aug. 22, 1927.

JOHANNES BUTTIKOFER, Corresponding Fellow, died in his 77th year at Berne, Switzerland, June 24, 1927.

HENRY LUKE WHITE, Corresponding Fellow, aged 67, died at Belltrees, Scone, New South Wales, Australia, May 30, 1927.

FRANK HALL KNOWLTON,² Member, aged 66, died at Ballston, Va., Nov. 22, 1926.

¹ For obituary notice see 'Auk,' XLIV, p. 594 and XLV, p. 1.

² " " " " " " pp. 156-157.

WALDO L. ABBOTT, Associate, died in his 90th year at Boston, Mass., Nov. 19, 1926.

JOHN WARREN ACHORN, Associate, died in 1926 (?)

MRS. HIRAM BYRD,¹ Associate, aged 53, died at Bradenton, Fla., Oct. 14, 1926.

MISS MARY STELLA CLARKE, Associate, aged about 64, died at Cape May, N. J., Jan. 15, 1927.

HENRY KELSO COALE,² Associate, aged 68, died at Highland Park, Ill., Oct. 13, 1926.

CHARLES A. DEWEY, Associate, of Rochester, N. Y., died June 13, 1927.

MISS MARY DRUMMOND, Associate, died in her 80th year, at Lake Forest, Ill., Apr. 22, 1926.

WILLIAM HENRY GRIM, Associate, of Hamburg, Pa., died in his 78th year, Dec. 26, 1926.

MRS. KINGSMILL MARRS, Associate, died at Boston, Mass., Sept. 23, 1926.

WILLIAM S. MCCREA, Associate, of Chicago, Ill., died May 27, 1927.

MISS LUCY N. MORRIS, Associate, of Montclair, N. J., died Oct. 5, 1927.

MRS. EDMUND QUINCY MOSES, Associate, of New York City, died in the spring of 1927.

CHARLES JACKSON PAINE, Associate, of Boston, Mass., died in New Brunswick, Aug. 4, 1926.

HENRY JOSEPH PERRY, Associate, of Boston, Mass., died Feb. 1926.

LE ROY TITUS WEEKS, Associate, of Tabor, Iowa, aged 73, died Mar. 4, 1927.

¹ For obituary notice see 'Auk,' XLIV, pp. 162-163.

² " " " " " " " " p. 165.