

Re-naming Australian Birds.
TO THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.

Sirs,

In Vol. IV., Part 1 of this Journal, Mr. A. J. Campbell states that I have criticised his address "somewhat biasedly." Allow me to say that my statements were only in accordance with up-to-date ornithology. I should now like to comment upon Mr. Campbell's letter taking the salient points as they there stand.

1. Mr. Campbell quotes dictionaries and encyclopaedias, as to nomenclature being a science, but I venture to say that there are many things understood, which do not appear in such literature, but which could be proved easily enough. The naming of birds in the vernacular may not be scientific, but to name them scientifically with scientific names is certainly so, and therefore must be a science.

2. I know a little about the Army and the Navy, Mr. Campbell knows the Civil Service, and we all know that it is the general practice that the officers move up as vacancies occur in next of rank, but this is away from the point, for I contend this has nothing to do with Ornithology, why bring it in?

3. Mr. Campbell is modifying his views now, when he says "a good starting point for *some* (the italics are mine) Australian names, and those that are ornithologically correct," for Mr. Campbell led us to believe John Gould was his rock-bed priority.

4. Mr. Campbell quotes Prof. Macgillivray upon John Gould's works. He means at the time of their publication, but every progressive Ornithologist knows we have outlived them, and must have an up-to-date list.

5. Mr. Campbell must know that John Gould redescribed birds, which had been described years before him, and in Mr. Campbell's own words he says John Gould's scientific work is obsolete, but in other ways he is not.

6. Mr. Campbell should not state that I have made severe reflections on biological professors, for he knows well enough when I say "any Australian Ornithologist being deemed worthy to sit on the National Committee," I mean members of the *Old School* of Ornithology.

7. There is no wobbling on my side, but there certainly is with those who find their position untenable. Mr. Campbell put his broad plank of popular names on top of his narrow scientific one.

8. I feel sure those learned gentlemen, the Editors of "The Ibis" and "The Auk" must feel greatly flattered when they read Mr. Campbell's words,—“Moreover they showed careless criticism when they referred to 'lack of' or 'that no synonymy' was given,” when every one knows this to be correct. The list may have led up to all the literature known to the compilers, but others would like to differ.

9. How does Mr. Campbell know that I am not in close touch with members of the said Committee? To hear one say that all scientific work done in Moscow and Berlin prior to the war must be rescinded is absolutely ridiculous.

10. All ornithologists in Australia we know unfortunately are not progressive, but I am glad to think the majority now are, and Mr. Campbell must be realizing this at last. It is absolute nonsense to say “Mr. So-and-So is pushing the priority rule to an extent that is causing confusion.” I say Mr. So-and-So, (by which is implied Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, the author of that splendid work—“The Birds of Australia”), is only following the eminent Zoologists of the world. But let me tell Mr. Campbell this, as one who knows, that the makers of the Laws of Priority are carrying out the full meaning of the laws, and any one who tries to do otherwise is up against a stone wall at once. The next R.A.O.U. “Check List” will fall into line with the world's scientists, or I am very much mistaken. The Old School must give way in this as in other sciences. I have grounds for saying this because an absolute majority of the R.A.O.U. have voted for a second edition of the Check-list according to the *International Code*. It should have been called a New Check-list, for it will have nothing to do with the old and worthless List.

S. A. WHITE,

“Wetunga,” 28-6-19.