

BLUE JAY CHATTER

As we work for the protection of the hawks and owls in Saskatchewan it is encouraging to learn that people all over the world are campaigning for birds of prey. Not long ago in the *Observer* (June 8, 1958) we read a letter by Richard Fitter written from Helsinki, Finland, where he was attending the conference of the International Committee for Bird Preservation. One of the chief preoccupations of this international conference was the protection of birds of prey.

A great obstacle to achieving protection of birds of prey, Mr. Fitter pointed out, is the widespread and almost universal conviction that "a bird with a hooked beak must be harmful." Because this is so prevalent an attitude in the Western world, Mr. Fitter was greatly pleased to hear the Indian delegate, Dr. Salim Ali, say that in India, though only vultures are actually protected, there is no problem at all with irresponsible shooting of birds of prey! By contrast, throughout Europe (and in the British Isles as much as anywhere), Mr. Fitter noted, one could almost suppose that men are born with a sort of instinctive revulsion against hooked beaks.

A second great danger to the birds of prey arises from the appearance of a new generation of post-war "sportsmen" who shoot at anything that flies or moves, without bothering to inquire what it is, let alone whether it is protected. Mr. Fitter told how the International Committee for Bird Preservation was trying to meet these twin dangers by urging its member organizations in 45 countries to undertake an educational campaign, particularly by leaflet and film. It was thought that a good film on the birds of prey could do much to help, especially if it were shown widely in rural districts.

We like to think that the film project suggested by the international conference has a kind of counterpart in an educational programme carried on in Alberta by some enthusiastic members of the Edmonton Zoological Society. When Al Oeming, president of the Edmonton society, visited the Regina society last March to tell about his experiences with birds of prey, he mentioned the splendid films and photographs of hawks and owls being prepared and shown to the public by C. G. Hampson and E. T. Jones of Edmonton.

The question of the protection of birds of prey in Saskatchewan will be discussed at our annual meeting in Saskatoon on October 18. We are happy to have as our guest speaker for the meeting, John A. Livingston, Executive Director of the Audubon Society of Canada. Because he is a personal friend of ours and a great friend of the birds of prey, we are looking forward to having Jack Livingston in Saskatoon.

The annual meeting this fall is being planned and organized by the Saskatoon Natural History Society which has already prepared an outline of the programme, printed in this issue of the **Blue Jay**. The executive and members of the provincial society are grateful to the Saskatoon society for undertaking the organization of this meeting. We know from the successful arrangements made by the Prince Albert Society for the summer meeting at Emma Lake how great a contribution a local society can make to the activities of our larger group. All of us who spent a happy weekend at Emma Lake in June join in saying thank you to the hard-working Prince Albert members who made that outing so enjoyable and stimulating.

Another meeting that is in our minds these days is the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union to be held in Regina in 1959. To have the A.O.U. meeting in Regina is at once a great honour and a generous tribute to the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History and to our society. Dr. W. Nero and his committee are already making plans for the event. We hope to have a really successful meeting with a good representation from Saskatchewan "birders." The field trips and paper sessions will be open to non-members, as well as to A.O.U. members, and we hope that everyone in our society who is interested in birds will come to the meeting to learn more about them and to meet distinguished birdmen from across the continent.