

## A.O.U. MEETING IN WINNIPEG

The 93rd annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.) will be held on the University of Manitoba campus from Monday to Friday, August 25 through 29, 1975. The A.O.U. is the oldest and largest professional ornithological society in the Western Hemisphere and it is thus a great honour for us to be able to host its annual meeting in Winnipeg. This will be only the second time that the meeting has been held in western Canada; the first was in Regina in 1959.

Experts in all aspects of ornithology from all over North America and probably from several foreign countries — artists, lecturers, photographers, researchers, conservationists — will be on hand to discuss the latest discoveries and advancements in the study of birds. This is an opportunity to rub elbows with one of the foremost ornithologists of our time. Yes, Roger Tory Peterson will probably be here!

**WHO MAY ATTEND:** All ornithologists, birdwatchers and naturalists are invited to register and attend this meeting. One need NOT be a member of the A.O.U. in order to attend. Too scientific? Not so! The role of the amateur in the field of ornithology, both past and present, is continually being emphasized. All activities (except business sessions) are open to non-A.O.U. members. There will be a registration fee of \$8.00 (\$12.00 for a married couple) and a charge of \$4.75 for the banquet.

**PLACE:** University Centre in the middle of the University of Manitoba campus.

**PROGRAMME:** SUNDAY, August 24: Registration in late afternoon and early evening. MONDAY, August 25: Registration (all day); business meetings for Council Members, Fellows, Elective Members; all-day field trip to Delta Marsh and Delta Waterfowl Station (leaving 9:00 a.m.):

afternoon field trip to Oak Hammock Marsh (leaving 1:30 p.m.); get-acquainted hour at 8:30 p.m. TUESDAY, August 26: Registration (all day); papers being given all day; activities for wives of delegates; tour of the David Loch gallery of wildlife art in St. Vital; information reception in University Centre in evening. WEDNESDAY, August 27: Registration (all day); papers given all day; ornithological films at 8:30 p.m. THURSDAY, August 28: Papers all day; annual banquet at 7:00 p.m. FRIDAY, August 29: All-day field trip to Hecla Island (leaving at 7:30 a.m.).

Arrangements are being made for local bird trips each morning before the sessions start.

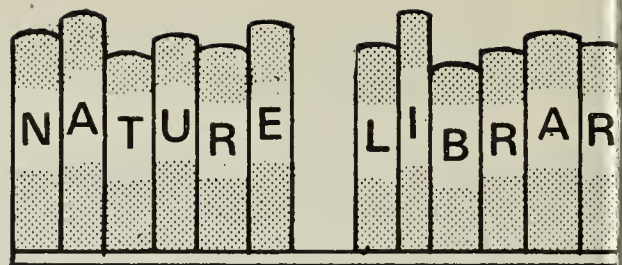
For preregistration forms and other information, please contact Dr. Spencer Sealy, Chairman, Local Committee on Arrangements, Department of Zoology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

## 30 Years Ago

The April-May-June, 1945, *Blue Jay* contained 10 8-1/2 X 11 mimeographed pages. Some of the items from it were:

Judge L. T. McKim of Melville recalled rare birds he had seen over the previous 20 years. He also noted that the "first pair of Arkansas Kingbirds appeared in Melville in 1924, and for four years running, nested behind a can on an electric light pole at the back of our yard . . . These kingbirds are now quite common here and are reported much further north than Melville" . . . Dick Beddoes conducted a Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 28, 1944, at Daysland, Alberta; he remarked "that the Sharp-tailed Grouse is down in numbers and that, for the first time since he has been making Christmas Censuses, he did not see a single true Prairie Chicken" . . . H. H. Pittman of

Wauchope reported that two pairs of orioles built nests and then disappeared. "Shortly after this I noticed a kingbird perched beside one of the oriole nests and found that another kingbird was actually inside the nest. There were, however, no eggs in this nest. A few days later we saw the kingbirds at the other nest and found it contained four eggs. These were hatched in due course and I was able to get a series of pictures of the Eastern Kingbird feeding its young in the nest of the Baltimore Oriole" . . . R. C. Mackenzie reported on tapping Manitoba Maples along the Carrot River to collect syrup and make sugar . . . On hibernating frogs: "one spring Mrs. Marion Nixon disturbed an old hot bed, and huddled there at the junction of soil and manure were about twenty small Swamp Tree Frogs. The ground was still partly frozen and some of them were still encased in icy soil — but just as soon as a clod became broken to expose a leg, that leg would start wiggling, flexing rhythmically and slowly, and soon the owner would squirm his whole body free". . . What happens to dead skunks? C. Fehrenbach of Saltcoats wrote that "A few years ago he shot a skunk about six feet from a small culvert. The body lay around for some days and then it too disappeared leaving only a slight depression in the grass where it had lain. But near the opening of the culvert Mr. Fehrenbach noticed that the soil had been disturbed as if some animal had been scratching there, so he looked inside, and there was another skunk, rolling, tossing and throwing his dead friend around. The next day when Mr. Fehrenbach returned to the spot there was "no sight or sound of either animal dead or alive. Has anyone, he asks, ever come across a similar occurrence?" . . . An account of banding done by George H. Lang at Indian Head covers a total of 6,208 birds between 1923 and 1939, including 1,662 Robins, 859 Black-crowned Night Herons and 85 Burrowing Owls . . . Early dates for bats were supplied by J. D. Ritchie of Wallwort: May 14, 1931; May 10, 1932, and May 7, 1934.



### SILTON SEASONS

From the Diary of a Countryman  
 By. R. D. Symons  
 Published by Doubleday Canada Ltd.  
 105 Bond Street,  
 Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1Y3  
 200 pp. January 1975. \$7.95

No, Mr. Symons, neither your spirit nor your pen has faltered in worthily presenting your observations of a life spent with joy and beauty. (Answer to last paragraph of Preface.)

Many millions of persons have more knowledge, scientific or otherwise, than R. D. Symons, but few more have the gift of wisdom he possesses.

"Silton Seasons" consists of a twelve-month excerpt from Symons' diary, written after retirement from an interesting but hard, rugged life. It carries us through a year, month by month — each chapter a joy to anyone interested in nature whether birds, mammals, plants, trees or the wonder of clean air and glorious skies. Symons' descriptive writing is superb in its simplicity, and his obvious love and knowledge of all things wild and natural will continue to thrill any nature lover, at the same time creating awareness in those whose thoughts have not yet awakened to the joy and beauty surrounding us.

However, "Silton Seasons" is more than a nature book. Each chapter displays a wealth of prairie history actually experienced by the author. Nostalgia for the old days is never present yet he is sufficiently wise to realize that time cannot stand still — machinery displaces the horse, populations grow, methods of travel have changed the whole world. Although all these things have to a great extent contributed to spoiling the land he loved, he seldom shows bitter-