

LOOKING BACK

An editor's first issue has to be his most frightening and disorganized — I hope. First of all, 64-page issue of the *Blue-Jay* requires more than 100 pages of double-spaced typed material and photographs. Where was it all going to come from in less than two months? That by itself seemed enough to worry about but when I looked through some 22 other amateur bird and natural history magazines in Canada and the United States. I found that the *Blue Jay* had practically no competition in terms of caliber, variety and number of articles and professional appearance. If there were an international award for such journals, I had no doubt that the *Blue Jay* would have richly deserved it. So now, not only to fill the March issue but also the responsibility of maintaining the high standards set by Dr. Ledingham. The items did come in and in the end, we sent more material to the printer than could be used in this issue.

We have made a few changes and, if some of these detract from the quality of the *Blue Jay*, we can only hope that others compensate. First of all, Midwest Litho, with a very helpful and patient staff, became our printers again and this automatically meant new type faces. We have also enlarged the editorial staff and without their help this issue would not have been published on schedule. Among other modifications, we have largely dropped scientific names and attempted to make references to other literature less distracting in the text. To accomplish these two changes, we modified many of our contributors' manuscripts without consulting them — because of a shortage of time. To those who may rightfully resent my unauthorized changes, I offer my apologies.

My most heartening experience in compiling this issue involved the article on prehistoric bears by Dr. C. R. Harington, Curator of Quaternary Zoology, National Museums of Canada. I was able to get very little out of several paragraphs in the first version of his paper because of technical terms. Having no other article on paleontology for this issue, it was with many misgivings that I returned a heavily marked manuscript and asked for a revision that the naturalist-on-the-street might appreciate. Two weeks later I received a new manuscript as well as the drawing that adorns our front cover. To an editor, happiness is that kind of cooperation.

In this connection, I feel that the *Blue Jay* should contain material that the amateur naturalist, whether housewife, salesman, farmer or junior member, can read and come away with a better appreciation of that aspect of his or her environment. At the same time, we want the *Blue Jay* to continue to be interesting and useful to professional biologists. We need articles by these specialists and we want articles in their fields of endeavour but we have to have them written in such a way that an interested person with little or no background can understand them. That, I think, is one of the most important functions of the *Blue Jay*.

Going back to scientific names, they interfere with the reading of a sentence and are probably useless to most of our readers. Nevertheless, because they are more universally recognized than common names, scientific names are used to ensure that anyone anywhere can know what species is being discussed. Deleting scientific names, therefore, would require that we standardize common names. For this issue we have used the common names found in the Peterson Field Guide Series. Anyone having any doubts about what plant or animal is meant, can find a description of it and its scientific name in a volume from that series. The guides are incomplete for our area and so other references would be needed. And we will have to continue using some scientific names.

We can assure those who disagree with our innovations that none of them is irrevocable. We welcome your opinions on the *Blue Jay* and have enclosed a questionnaire in this issue to encourage you to let us know what you want to see and how you want to see it in your journal.

— The Editor