

by road at 1 p.m. on July 7 to deliver the consignment at Guildford Airport for loading aboard the east-bound plane leaving the same evening. The eggs duly reached Melbourne about 9.30 a.m. on the following day and were taken direct to the hatchery at Snobb's Creek, where hatching will be completed.

It is of interest to note that the time occupied in transferring the ova from hatchery to hatchery was less than 24 hours as against 80 hours in 1931 when the first parcel of eggs was delivered by air.

### CORMORANTS

Following a request by the Yacht Racing Association to the Minister for the lifting of protection on cormorants, which were fouling members' craft moored on the Swan River, the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee at its meeting on July 17 decided to wait on the Minister to discuss the application and to demonstrate that from the point of view of the Committee the lifting of the protection on the little pied cormorant and the small black cormorant (the large black cormorant is unprotected) was scarcely warranted. Arrangements had previously been made for Mr. J. Traynor, Fauna Warden, to obtain three or four cormorants on the Swan River, and these were taken to the Minister's office on July 20.

The deputation from the Committee, which comprised the Chairman (Mr. A. J. Fraser), Dr. D. L. Serventy, Mr. H. B. Shugg (Acting Secretary) and Warden Traynor, explained that the Association's suggestions, which envisaged the payment of bonuses, the shooting of shags both on the Swan River and in their nesting places, were impracticable, bearing in mind that cormorants nested and rested not in confined areas but in any of the hundreds of swamps lying between Shark Bay and Cape Leeuwin. Dr. Serventy pointed out that to make any impression on the population it would require a major operation with an army of shooters which would cost a colossal sum. Besides being impracticable, any attempt of this nature would, Dr. Serventy continued, lead to a serious disturbance of wild duck and other water fowl which used the same nesting areas and whose breeding season to a large extent coincided with that of the cormorant. He went on to say that shooting on

the Swan River would be most unpopular and dangerous, and that in any case the result would not be very satisfactory as at the first shot the cormorants would rise and disperse. He maintained that destruction by poisoning would be a dangerous procedure because of the danger to all other useful birds. Dr. Serventy intimated that the only cormorant which was not protected was the large black cormorant, and this bird was removed from the protected list because it was the only one which fed to any extent on fish of commercial value. The little pied cormorant was the bird to cause fouling of boats, which caused the greatest concern to the Yacht Racing Association, and the percentage of commercially valuable fish which it took was extremely low. He said that the pied cormorant was the sole producer of guano, and with growing superphosphate shortages, destruction of this species without restriction would be very short-sighted.

To illustrate the Committee's contention on the feeding habits of these birds, the two little pied cormorants and the one small black cormorant which had been secured by Mr. Traynor, were dissected by Dr. Serventy. The stomach contents were as follows -

1. Little Pied Cormorant - 2 gobies.
2. Little Pied Cormorant - 1 spider crab, 1 shrimp.
3. Small Black Cormorant - 5 anchovies.

(N.B. The little pied cormorants were shot while actually feeding and the small black cormorant was taken when returning from feeding.)

After general discussion the Minister decided that a meeting would be arranged between representatives of the Yacht Racing Association and the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee to be held in his office on a date to be fixed. Arrangements would be made for both the Committee and the Association to obtain and produce cormorants for inspection.

#### DEPARTMENT TAKES UP BOAT-BUILDING

Recently, as part of its plan to train younger inspectors in boat-building methods, the Department undertook the construction of a bondwood flat-bottom