

Obituary

ROBERT HALL (1867-1949)

Robert Hall, whose death occurred at Hobart on September 19, 1949, was a former Curator of the Tasmanian Museum and also an ornithologist of distinction. In latter years, however, with indifferent health, he had little association with scientific activities, although he remained a 'bird lover' to the end, and his knowledge continued to be imparted freely to students.

He died at the age of 81, leaving as his memorial several books on Australian ornithology; whilst there were few ornithological publications in Australia and abroad in which articles from his pen were not featured during his earlier years. Past numbers of *The Emu*, *The Victorian Naturalist*, and *The Tasmanian Naturalist* contain several of his papers, many of value to-day. The books he wrote included *A Key to the Birds of Australia and Tasmania* (1899), *Insectivorous Birds of Victoria* (1900), *Some Useful Birds of Southern Australia* (1907), and *Australian Bird Maps* (1922).

A foundation member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, he was also its president for a time. Before coming to Hobart in 1908 to accept the position of Curator of the Tasmanian Museum, he lived in Melbourne, and it was from there that he left in 1903 for a trip to Siberia, being probably the first British naturalist to travel to the mouth of the Lena River. On that expedition he collected bird specimens to the number of 401 and added considerably not only to the knowledge of Siberian ornithology, but also of the movements and breeding areas of migrant birds from Tasmania and Australia; the skins went to Rothschild's museum at Tring.

Mr. Hall also collected birds in Northern India and on Kerguelen Island. Honours which were awarded him included that of Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society of London and a Fellowship of the Linnean Society.

Himself a taxidermist of considerable ability, Mr. Hall did much to build up the bird skin collection of the Tasmanian Museum which contains many of his beautifully executed specimens.

M.S.R.S.