

## NEST OF HOUSE SPARROW.

By W. A. Williamson, Burkes.

An analysis of a nest of the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is given below:—

Situation.—At Burkes, a suburban area on the Otago Harbour.

Position.—In a macrocarpa tree about twenty feet above ground, exposed to all winds but quite unnoticeable from the ground.

Size.—Depth, 7 inches; width, 8 inches. Nest would take a small closed fist.

Construction.—From within out: Lined with feathers, white predominating, though black feathers were available in the hen yard below the nest; the white feathers were brought from adjacent yards, 50, 100, 200 yards away. Immediately below the feathers in the bottom was a layer of green fescue (tops only). The number of fescue tops and stalks is so similar that I would suggest that full stalks were taken to the nest and then the heads cut off just below the first offshoot while the stalks were incorporated in the outer construction. The remainder of the nest was of grass at least half of which was complete with roots. Most of the wool, hair, string, etc., was included with the feathers, while the roots and twigs reinforced the outer grass casing. The pieces of insulation were picked off the high tension wires. (I have witnessed this annually for some years.) The piece of string 57½ inches long was a length of cotton twine from a bag seam, the 14½-inch piece was wrapping twine looped in two places and measured without being untied; the piece of cotton cloth, 6 inches long, was a strip from the top of a pillow case, complete with one tie. Most of the string was coir from a mat, the majority of the residue being coir which was completely unravelled.

### Material.—

Material.	No.	Length, Max.	Apothecaries' Wg.			
			Oz.	Dr.	Sc.	Gn.
Feathers—White .....	769					
"    Black .....	178			6	0	3½
Grass—Cocksfoot .....	90			4	1	10
Couch .....	170			6	0	18
Straw .....	16					
Chickweed .....	7					
Fescue Stalks .....	76	27½ inches		3	5	
Fescue Heads .....	74			1	11	
Roots .....	63	14½ inches		2	16	
Manuka Bark .....	7					
"    Twigs .....	6					16
Insulation .....	15					
String, mostly coir .....	37	57½, 14½, 10½ inches				
Cotton Thread .....	34					
"    Cloth .....	5	6 inches				
Wool, all kinds .....	39					
Paper .....	1			5	0	4½
Human Hair .....	27					
		Residue		3	0	6
	1,614					
				3	3	2 10

ALBATROSS ASTRAY.—On 20/3/49, after a very high spring tide, an albatross was found in the canal at the back of our farm. It was identified by Mr. H. R. McKenzie as a young wandering albatross. It appeared to be sick and when taken out of the water could only move with great effort. After a while it appeared to recover and was taken to the Thames coast on March 26 where it was hoped it would take off. When it failed to do so it was brought back to Pipiroa. It died on March 28.—Cynthia Dally, Pipiroa, Hauraki Plains.

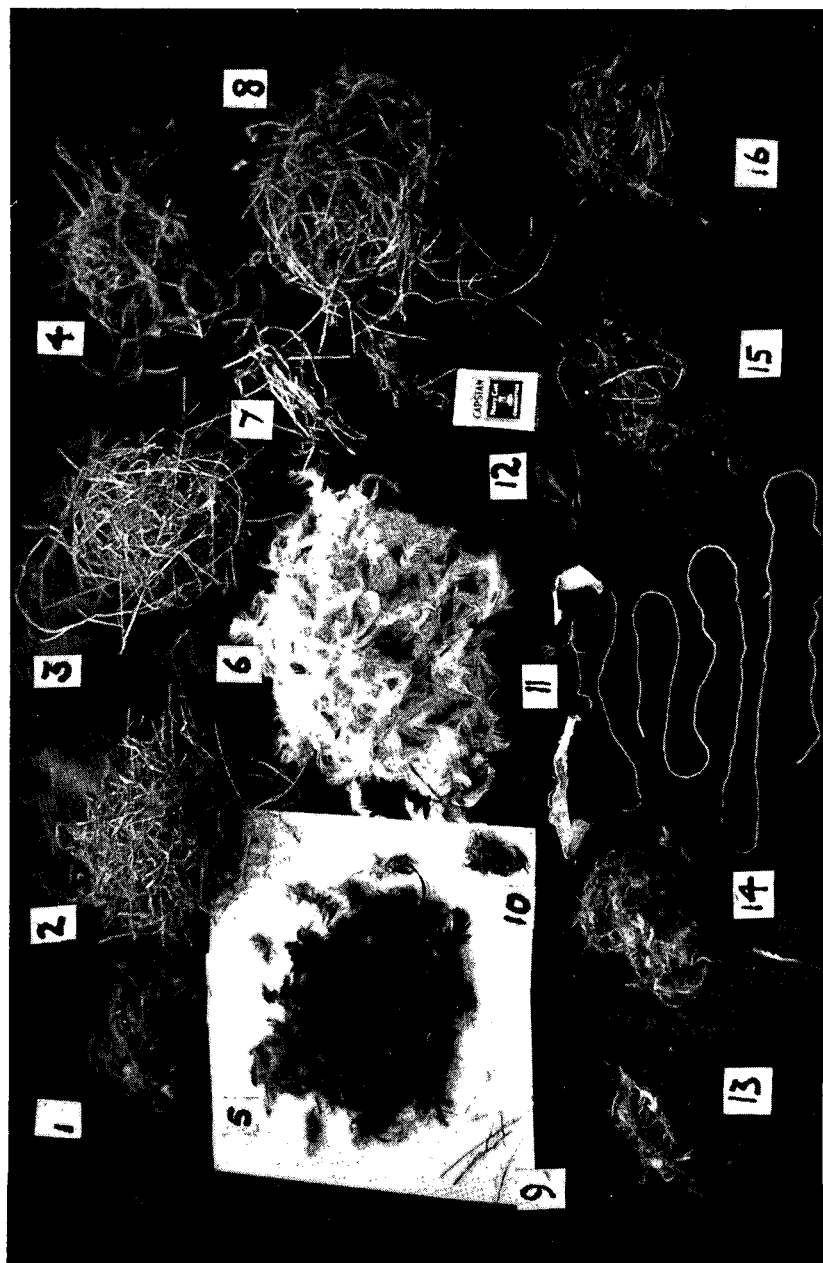


Photo by W. A. Williamson.

MATERIAL IN HOUSE SPARROW'S NEST.—1 Coir, 2 Couch, 3 Fescue Stalks, 4 Fescue Tops, 5 Black Feathers, 6 White Feathers, 7 Straw and (below) Chickweed, 8 Cocksfoot, 9 Manuka Twigs, 10 Insulation, 11 Cloth and String, 12 Manuka Bark, 13 Thread, etc., 14 Wool, 15 Roots, 16 Residue.