

and shape of the bill was very evident; that of the Little Egret being longer, more slender and sharply pointed.

When feeding, the Cattle Egrets kept to the grass near the water, while the Little Egret waded in water up to its knees.

I had another look at them on 30/9/64 while they were feeding among cattle, and although I could not get very close, I could see that the head of one of them was of a distinct buff colour. When alarmed on this occasion, they flew over my head and alighted on a macrocarpa tree.

— E. B. JONES



#### REPORTED LITTLE BITTERN AT MEREMERE

Re the article "Little Bittern at Meremere," P. J. Howard, *Notornis* X, 317-319, and the further article "Note on Little Bittern," Dr. R. A. Falla, *Notornis* X, 412-413. Since this identification is now doubtful the parties concerned are studying the matter more deeply, with valued help from Dr. R. A. Falla and Mr. E. G. Turbott, and it is hoped to publish the findings later.

— P. J. HOWARD, J. L. KENDRICK, H. R. McKENZIE



#### PLUMAGE OF BLACK FANTAIL

Oliver's *N.Z. Birds* (2nd ed., p. 495) implies that the female Black Fantail (*Rhipidura f. fuliginosa*) may be distinguished from the male by the presence of white spots over the ear coverts. Brian Bell, however (*pers. comm.*), had his doubts. That his doubts were justified was demonstrated by my observation of a mated pair of Black Fantails both of which showed white spots. This pair had four eggs and reared four young. The nest was visited frequently and only the two birds were in attendance. The remote possibility of a polygamous nesting with, by chance, only the two females being seen, may confidently be excluded.

The presence of white spots over the ear coverts of the Black Fantail, therefore, does not necessarily mean that the individual is a female.

— M. F. Soper



### OBITUARY

Major Robert Adams Wilson, D.S.O., who died at his home 'Lethenty,' Bulls, on 27th November 1964, in his 89th year, was a New Zealander distinguished in many fields of interest and of enterprise. A son of the late Sir James Wilson, a Rangitikei pioneer, he was borne at Bulls in 1875 and educated at Wanganui College. In the years before World War I, he was engaged in establishing saw-mills along the newly-opened main trunk line and for recreation playing in a Rangitikei Polo Team which won the Saville Cup. After military service with the Royal Garrison Artillery 1916-18, he took up farming in his home district and made a success of developing coastal sandhill country and establishing impressive records with Friesian dairy cattle. Within the limits of a life-span of near four score years and ten, he found time for zestful participation in such active sports as wildfowl shooting and deerstalking, maintained a consistent skill at bridge, an