

of the Society. A drawing of a hand emphasizing the features of finger- and palm-print patterns is reproduced from this article. The memorandum is, however, essentially concerned with the results of successful tests in the long-distance identification of criminals conducted during the past year by New Scotland Yard in co-operation with the Commissioner of Police, Victoria, Australia, and Messrs. Cable and Wireless, Ltd.

The report is illustrated by a specimen transmission card which contains, in addition to two photographs of the wanted person, an enlarged print of one finger with coded description of the other nine digits, and a complete description of the individual, and the information required in connexion with him. All this matter is contained on a card approximately 10 in. × 9 in. in size; and this formed the picture which in one test was transmitted from London to Melbourne in seven minutes so successfully that a cable setting forth the person's record was received from Melbourne the next morning. These tests thus culminated in the successful identification in Australia of a person who was actually in custody in Great Britain and whose trial was imminent. Similar facilities for radio picture transmission are now available between London and many towns in various parts of the world, both within and outside the British Empire.

the birds known in Britain, like the chaffinch, great tit, kingfisher, robin, song thrush and blackbird. The blackbird, skylark and song thrush do not sing in Palestine in their winter sojourn, and the robin sings only occasionally at daybreak. The cuckoo rarely calls on its migration; nightjars do not sing. Absence of bird song, particularly thrush song, is noticeable to the British visitor, but the song-birds common to Britain and Palestine are the greenfinch, great tit, chaffinch, goldfinch, corn-bunting and, occasionally, the chiff-chaff. The familiar calls of the robin and redshank are commonly heard in winter, but the robin, as well as the blackbird and song thrush, are much shier and less easy to approach than in Britain. Birds peculiar to Palestine include the Palestine babbler, the Palestine blackstart, the Palestine graceful warbler, Tristram's grackle and the Palestine sunbird. The grackle and the sunbird are extending their way northwards from the Dead Sea depression. The bulbul is supposed to have increased its numbers considerably this century, but several birds have decreased. The white stork, the lammergeir, the imperial eagle and the white-faced duck no longer nest in the country, while the great bustard, the Syrian ostrich and the Egyptian goose are apparently extinct in Palestine. Unlike Cairo, Jerusalem and the cities of Palestine are not the habitat of flocks of kites, but also unlike Cairo, Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv have a large summer nesting population of swifts.

## BIRDS OF PALESTINE

WHILE serving in Palestine, Captain Eric Hardy became the secretary of the Jerusalem Naturalists Club which had been founded for the troops by Middle East Command to stimulate interest in and co-ordinate the numerous inquiries in natural history that were already being pursued by a number of individual soldiers. One of the most notable activities of the Club was the listing of the birds of Palestine. The duty was undertaken because of the lack of a modern and authoritative account of Palestinian birds, and, besides their records of 364 species and 68 sub-species, work was also carried out on problems of migration. These, together with records of the most-used bird haunts, have been put together by Captain Hardy in a privately printed list which, it is hoped, will be the forerunner of an authoritative and comprehensive handbook of Palestinian ornithology\*.

The region is of particular interest because the Palearctic region of the north and the Ethiopian region of the south meet across the centre of the country. The little owl, for example, shows interesting northern, southern and intermediate races, and several African birds like the sunbird (*Cinnyris*), the darter (*Anhinga*), the sooty falcon and the lappet-faced vulture (*Otogyps*) penetrate the country from the Syro-African Rift Valley, and oriental birds like the fishing owl (*Ketupa*) and the black-headed bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*) also occur. The main migration routes between Europe and Africa pass through the country.

The only native bird to migrate to Palestine is the gannet (*Sula bassana*), although several 'British' species from eastern Europe, like the European swallow, the rook, redshank, teal and cuckoo, are seen. There are also several closely allied races of

\* A Handbook of the Birds of Palestine. By Captain Eric Hardy. Pp. iii + 50. (Education Officer-in-Chief. G.H.Q., Middle East Forces, 1946.)

## CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON REPORT FOR 1944-45

ONE of the most interesting passages in the report of the president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Dr. Vannevar Bush, which is included, together with the reports of the executive committee, the directors, and on departmental activities, in the Yearbook No. 44 for 1944-45, covering the year July 1, 1944-June 30, 1945, is that in which he discusses the future of scientific research, and particularly the bearing on it of the Selective Service, the further extension of which as regards science and engineering students has since been severely criticized by H. A. Meyerhoff (*Science*, April 19). Dr. Bush points out first that while the United States is at last awake to the value of scientific research, it is not by any means certain that every area where the scientific method can add to man's understanding of himself and his environment will be adequately explored, and that the danger of lack of balance between applied research, research in the physical sciences, medical science and in other fields may be exaggerated by the serious deficit in scientific man-power due to the policies pursued during the War. The two governing principles, that every citizen should be ready to sacrifice equally in the common cause and that every man should be used in the place where his talents can contribute most fully to the common effort, were not in balance. As a result, by taking too many trained young scientific workers and engineers out of the laboratories and industry, part of the war effort was nearly wrecked, while at the same time the future was sacrificed to immediate needs and a lack of scientific man-power created from which the country will not recover for many years.