

since 1927, but whether by the same pair of birds he did not know. In contrast to the bower, which is essentially a playground, the nest built by the bower birds is very flimsy. Their food consists of wild fruits, such as berries.

Mr. L. R. Black's monthly report on butterflies, birds and snakes was read and discussed.

ELIZABETH KENNEDY,

Hon. Secretary.

PUBLICATIONS

- No. 1. Check List of North Queensland Orchids. Price 1/-.
- No. 2. Marketable Fish of the Cairns area. Price 1/-.
- No. 3. Check List of North Queensland Ferns. Price 1/-.
- No. 4. List of Edible Fruits of North Queensland. Price 2/-.
- No. 5. List of Birds Occuring in North Queensland. Price 2/-.



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An Aboriginal Spinning Top

(By KEITH KENNEDY, Museum of Music, Townsville)

The illustration shows a spinning top once used by the aborigines of the North Queensland rain forest. At the beginning of this century, it was brought down to Sydney, New South Wales, from the Atherton Tableland. This kind of top is now very rare, owing to being made from

amongst the rain forest blacks of the Tully River, and states that the hole in the side to cause the hum was a recent innovation.

Measurements of the illustrated specimen, which is now in the Musical Museum of Townsville are: diameter of gourd 6.5 cm., length of wooden spindle on the axis of which the top spins, 16cm., its diameter being 6 cm. The spindle passes through two holes, one at the top and the other at the bottom of the gourd, and is held in place by native string and a black gum.

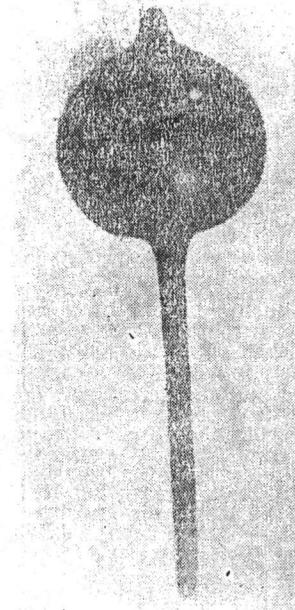
Two lateral holes 5 mm. in diameter are burnt in the gourd to cause the hum when it spins, which is done by rotating the longer end of the spindle between the palms of the hands and dropping the top on a suitable surface. To prevent the gourd from becoming fractured, the aboriginals would often spin a top on a piece of native cloth manufactured from bark (2).

A top made of beeswax flattened into a disc through which was thrust a wooden peg was once used by the blacks of the Cape Bedford district (1), and this was spun by twirling the proximal end of the peg between the fingers.

In Central Australia the Lake Eyre tribes use burnt gypsum mixed with water and rolled into a ball, into which a small peg of wood was inserted. The ball is spun with the fingers and rotates on the peg. In some parts of Central Australia and in Western Queensland the peg is dispensed with and the top becomes a spin ball.

(1) ROTH, N.Q. Ethnography, Bull. 4, Brisbane, 1902.

(2) KENNEDY, Bark Cloth of N.Q. Aborigines, N.Q. Naturalist, No. 71, Cairns, 1944.



a small gourd, *Benincasa vacua* F. Muell., which is rather brittle and so is easily destroyed. There were two varieties, the silent and the humming. Roth (1) saw them in use

H. Flecker Natural History Prize Essay, 1951

Observations on the Life History of *Coscinoscera hercules* (Misk.)

By JOHN McLOUGHLIN

Early in April last, seventy eggs of the Hercules Moth, *Coscinoscera hercules* (Misk.) were presented to my brother and myself in the hope that we might be able to rear them. On April 19th, sixty seven of these

seventy eggs hatched. The caterpillars were approximately an eighth of an inch in length, and of a chalky white in colour and covered with spines protruding at regular intervals along the back and side. Their first meal

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