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INVERCARGILL.

## WOODLANDS SUB-ASSOCIATION.

### SUCCESSFUL OPENING.

A well attended meeting of returned soldiers was held at Woodlands recently for the purpose of opening a sub-association. The secretary of the Invercargill Association (Mr L. Graham), and Mr Glass who had been deputed by a previous executive meeting, accompanied by Messrs Connors Sutton and Blake, motored out to Woodlands to take part in the initial work. Mr Waddel was appointed chairman of the meeting.

Mr Graham made a general analysis of the work of the Association and its relationship to the sub-associations. Invercargill's association now had 2000 members, and the work could very well be split up amongst the sub-associations who would be responsible to the parent association.

Sub-associations spread throughout the district would be more in touch with local conditions. There were men who were not aware of the provisions made for them by legislation, widows and pensioners cases were also more effectively brought into touch with the parent association and enabled their case to go through the proper channel. There had also been a tendency to loose the grip of country members, but with the assistance of the sub-association and the "Digger" they would be kept effectively in touch with one another.

Matters of pay and allowances, and gratuity were explained.

A great number of anomalies existed and it was essential that these should be put right. The New Zealand R.S.A. had pressed the Minister to set up an appeal board.

The pension was not sufficient. The cost of living had advanced so much that £2 per week as a maximum pension was insufficient. It was advisable to have Local Boards who could easily find out necessary information regarding the soldier.

A Board sitting in Wellington could not possibly know sufficient about a man in Invercargill. There were always conditions surrounding an applicant for a pension which were essential to a complete understanding of the case. Fines on service were now being refunded except those under Royal Warrant.

A great deal of dissatisfaction existed regarding the administration of the "Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act," and there was need for concerted action. Then there was the question of capital required. Repeated Ministerial statements said that capital was no bar, and yet men were being turned down every day by the Land Board.

Some of the land was unsuitable and the price for some was too great.

Mr Glass (secretary Repatriation Board) said the existence of sub-associations would tend to remove a lot of misconception. There is a feeling abroad that when the men are all back the work of the R.S.A. would be finished, but this was not so. As long as we had the deceased soldier's wife, his children, and the crippled with undermined constitution, then the R.S.A. must exist to take up their cases, and see that justice was meted out to them.

The public were quite pathetic over the various cases that they were aware of and now after war service they had to come home again and fight for their legitimate rights.

Any concessions that we may get in the future will be because we are one body. If we are not united we cannot get our just demands. The heart of the public is good, but they have not sufficient insight into the injustices which to-day exist. Invercargill had taken a lead in organisation, and now would have a paper which would keep returned men up-to-date in matters which affect their interest and provide the public with current "thought." Speaking on Repatriation, Mr Glass, said there were large numbers of people throughout Southland who were not aware of the provision provided by repatriation legislation. Every case was judged on its merits and everyone should be acquainted with the provisions made some time back. They had an employment bureau which had been very successful and there were now no men available for disposal. The Board advanced money up to £300 to assist men to get into a small business and large numbers availed themselves of this provision. The sum of £50 for furniture and tools for trade had been advanced to £75. The departments are training a number of men who are unable to follow their previous occupation.

A total of 110 men were employed as subsidised workers, and were being trained in a new occupation. A man's wage was subsidised in order to make it at least a living wage. If a man got an increase of salary from his employer it did not effect the subsidy.

There were men with interrupted university education who were given an allowance for tuition and books to keep them in comfort. The Invercargill Technical School had a number of men who

were being taught a commercial course as required.

The Association considered £300 insufficient and that the amount should be £500, especially when a man got £2500 for land. The Minister decided that reasonable gratification will be given before the benefits of repatriation cease.

It was decided to form an association and Mr Waddel was appointed chairman and Mr Congrieve, secretary, a committee consisting of Messrs R. Dawson, G. Dawson, Myeth, Philips and Walker was appointed to carry on the work.

## The Nature Column.

(BY "STUDENT.")

(Conducted by "Student," who will be pleased to receive notes on any branch of Natural History. Observations on birds, insects, plants etc., will be equally welcome. If using a pen-name will correspondents please enclose real name and address.)

### THE OBJECTS OF THE COLUMN.

The main object of the column is to encourage the study of natural history. And by the "study" of natural history is meant simply the ascertaining of exact knowledge about the living things which surround us, the ways of life of the birds, the insects, the plants, and the many other branches of nature's great family. And not the living things only, but that marvellous wonderland opened up when the meaning of rock and stone begins to be understood; when hill and valley, mountain peak and dizzy gorge, rushing torrent and placid lake each declare the story of their past, and in the light of that past point forward to the certain history of their future. The whole realm of nature—that is the ambitious field which the column is meant to cover. For there is no low or high in nature, no first or last. The dewdrop and the ocean, the hoar-frost on the pane and the iceberg of the arctic, the insect glinting in the sunshine and the mind and heart of man; these are but interlacing parts of one great whole. To add, then, to our knowledge, though but in the slightest degree, of any aspect of nature is the primary function of our column.

But just here rises a difficulty. "Student" is no encyclopaedia; his knowledge is very limited. His will is steadfast enough but his ability halts sadly in the rear of it. From which indisputable facts it follows clearly enough that the success or failure of the column depends largely on the help received from those who can speak with authority, the authority of direct observation, on this or that section of natural history. To such helpers we do not think the appeal will be made in vain. There must be many, very many, who, endowed with the faculty of keen observation for the collection of facts, or a naturally analytical mind for the formulation of theories, are capable of adding much to the store of nature knowledge. Such observers and thinkers are naturalists, whether they call themselves so or not. If they will through the medium of our column, tell what they have seen or what they have thought, then there can be no doubt that not only will the means of spending an interesting hour be established, but work of real scientific value will also be the outcome. For what is science? It is simply correct knowledge of things.

It has so often been pointed out that nature in New Zealand is of unusual interest that there is little need to stress the point here. Owing to the insular character of our country, its great length and consequent variation in climate and its isolated situation the plants and animals cannot fail to be of more than passing interest. Many distinguished scientists have visited its shores and studied and written about its strange and unique wonders. As a matter of fact, while these lines are being written, one of the most eminent of the world's entomologists is visiting the Dominion for the express purpose of studying certain primitive insects which are to be found only in our country. And, as in the insects, so in all other branches of New Zealand nature. In the birds we have the extinct moas; a lifetime might be spent at the problems which centre in these gigantic wingless birds of a past age. Where did they originate? Why did they die out? Here are two questions which are far from solution yet. And why are so many of our other birds flightless? The wekas, the kiwis, the kakapo and others. And why do our native birds tend to become extinct? It is not all to be put down to the stoat and weasel, for several kinds had become very scarce long before these vermin were introduced. Many

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other interesting subjects could be brought forward but enough have been advanced to give a hint of the wide field for research awaiting the bird lover. And turn where we will it is the same. Our fishes, our lizards, our plants, our shellfish, our spiders, our creeping things of every sort, they are all of as much interest as, many of them of much more than, the more brilliant and striking living things of the tropics.

And what adds a special interest to our native species is the melancholy but undisputed fact that they the majority of them are fast passing away. Plants and animals alike, they must yield to the march of progress. Our butter and cheese, our wheat and our wool, each box and crate and sack and bale of these mean so many of our wild plants swept away. Every introduced animal too, means a competitor thrown among the already hard pressed natives. What wonder that they dwindle from year to year. Perhaps the chief merit of this column will be to record a few facts about some of them before they finally disappear from the stage.

### INVERCARGILL RED CROSS.

Recent meetings of the executive of the R.S.A. have received a great number of complaints regarding the activities of the local Red Cross Society. It was frankly admitted that the Society had done good work during the war.

It appears that the Defence Department are unable to supply sufficient underclothing to discharged men and that special socks are sadly required. Attempts have been made in various centres to secure sufficient supplies of these socks, but without avail. The report goes that the Red Cross Society has ample but it has not been known. The Society has a large quantity of material left over, which could be bought at anything near the cost to last. General complaints to the executive alleged that the material was being sold and that comparatively few people except those associated with the Red Cross knew anything about.

It was contended that if material that the public in general subscribed to was for sale, then the public should know about it. There are soldier's widows also who would be very glad to avail themselves of this opportunity. It was decided to write to the Red Cross about the matter.

Later enquiries elicited the fact that the material was being sold. The sale would stop immediately until the R.S.A. had a chance of conferring with the Red Cross at a meeting to be held at an early date.

### THE LAST TRIBUTE.

A military funeral was accorded the late John Corbett, 2nd Lieutenant Main Body, N.Z.E.F., who died in the Southland hospital on Wednesday last, 10th March. Deceased was 32 years of age and had been gassed which was possibly the cause of his heart trouble. A firing party in charge of Lieut. Murphy marched in front of the procession followed by the Garrison Band, gun carriage and pall bearers, composed of six officers. The service was conducted at the graveside by Father Spillane. At the conclusion of the service the customary volleys were fired and with the sounding of the Last Post the mourners paid their last tribute to the dead.

"The 'Digger' will serve to remind its readers of the men who passed through that great struggle, and whose efforts made victory possible."

Bridagier General  
G. S. RICHARDSON.

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### LAND HO!

WHEN the sailor on the look-out makes the welcome cry from the crow's nest, he has just caught sight of the top of a mountain, but he has discerned the land and it is welcome news, no matter if it be a bleak and barren mountain.

But let us get down to the plains. Here we find the real land that will yield up its hidden treasure to the man who seeks it.

To the sailor, whether mountain or plain it is merely land, quality not concerning him. But the practical landman wants quality, and he will recognise the following as the right stuff.

(1) 75 ACRES; originally all heavy bush now in grass or crop. All necessary buildings. Great carrying capacity. Undoubtedly one of the best little dairying places in Southland. Price £52 10s. Cash £1000. Balance 5 per cent. for term of years.

We have a very fine selection of farms far and near.

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Eleven American States have voted a total of \$56,600,000 for highway expenditures during the next few years.

In cold temperature rates are found to develop a sort of "overcoat" or additional covering, which grows very quickly.

In the stomach of a bullock, which died suddenly near Rugby, were found a golf ball, a hatpin, and a five-inch nail.

Blotting paper was the result of a woman's spoiling of a batch into which she had forgotten to put any sizing material.

The leaf of the Ceylon talipot palm which grows to a hundred feet in height is so wide that it will cover twenty men.

The new Mayoress of Rochester, Southland, is a mayor's wife, a mayor's daughter, mayor's grand-daughter and mayor's niece.

Tons of matter are annually deposited from fogs, and a thick London mist contains a high percentage of dust, large sulphurous.