

SUB-ASSOCIATIONS' CONFERENCE

HELD IN THE SOLDIERS' CLUB ON SATURDAY, APRIL 24th., 1920.

The following gentlemen were present:—Mr D. M. Rae, (chair); Tuatapere, Messrs McFeely and Cunningham; Bluff, Messrs Brooks and McGorlick; Edendale, Messrs McRae and Cranston; Orepuki, Mr V. C. Crowther; Fortrose, Mr A. J. Millard; Executive, W. A. Sutton and secretary.

President:—The need has been felt for quite a while that a meeting be held, as the matter of rebate to country associations is evidently not meeting with general satisfaction, and in view of the fact that country representatives more or less take a strong attitude in the matter we feel that a great deal of good could be done if the country associations and the town association discuss the whole matter so that in the first place the country members might take back to their respective associations the views of headquarters on the matter, at the same time we might be able to do better to our local associations if we heard the views of these country members, and I really hope that you will take this opportunity of expressing openly your views on the matter of rebate. I shall now ask our secretary to explain the matter first, and then we shall proceed to hear the views of the country members.

Secretary:—The position in regard to the rebate is briefly as follows. I think it would be advisable to start from the beginning, when country sub-committees were first formed. As you are all aware early in the year our membership had increased to such a great extent that it was decided that something should be done, and with that in view representatives from this Association went to Tuatapere and Lumsden and formed sub-committees. Certainly there was nothing definite laid down. Our main object was really to get the thing started, and then if necessary to try and get it thrashed out, and see what decision could be arrived at in regard to rebate, etc. It was then suggested that we form country sub-committees and that the association rebate 12 per cent. Shortly after that, Conference decided that a new scheme of organisation would be brought into being which made provision for the forming of sub-associations. There was no restriction placed on the membership of these sub-associations, and no restrictions whatever as far as Conference was concerned. The District Organiser was appointed shortly afterwards, and as you know he came to Southland and formed sub-associations.

At a meeting held in Dunedin early in the year the District Council which was newly set up, went into the question of sub-associations, and the question of finance was discussed, and was decided at that meeting that they make a rebate of 4s per member to sub-associations. I was at that meeting and, frankly, gentlemen, I opposed it, because I considered that the associations could not without straining their finances do the thing conscientiously. I do not think that the other associations had studied the question out, in fact I would go so far as to say I am sure they had not, because at a council meeting which was held in Dunedin last month the question was brought up again, and it was decided to delete the whole clause dealing with finance and to let the amount of rebate be decided mutually between the parent-association and the sub-association concerned. Now this Association is perhaps the association that is going to be hardest hit in the matter; for we have a comparatively small town membership and 683 financial members belonging to sub-associations, a total of as I said last night, of 1716.

Out of these 1716 there are a certain number who have joined up during last month, and owing to the rush of work have not been posted, but we can say roughly that we have 650 country members and 900 town members. Now included in these town members are a great number of men who in all probability as time goes on will themselves form sub-associations. As a matter of fact some of them are asking now that sub-associations be formed. This will cut into the town membership to a considerable extent, and it is not leaving the parent-association a great amount of finance to carry on with.

For every financial member we pay 2s capitulation to headquarters, and 2s to district which leaves 6s. That 6s per member has to supply everything in connection with the Association, and as you can see from your statement of receipts and expenditure, our expenditures are fairly heavy. I have been doing my best to keep them down as low as possible, but they still have mounted up.

If a rebate of 4s is made to each sub-association, it is going to keep down the finances very considerably, and moreover

how are we going to adjust the finances of the parent-association? I may also ask, how are we going to apportion the work between sub-associations and the parent-association. It appears to me and to our outgoing executive that as practically all the work is done from Invercargill, it is absolutely necessary that a permanent staff to be employed. Now, if this permanent staff is going to be employed and the sub-associations are going to get their 4s per member, it is evident to be able to meet the expense at headquarters, there must be some arrangement arrived at, whereby headquarters would be able to make a scale of charges for work done for sub-associations. Our retiring president, said, and our new president says, that we want to meet sub-associations. We must have unity, and God help the soldier if we do not have it. If we are to get any settlement we must keep together.

We want you to go back to your sub-associations with expressed opinions, we want the thing gone into rationally, and gone into thoroughly. We are anxious to get it decided, and we are anxious for sub-associations to ask questions. We must remember that the difficult part is going to be the agreement about the rebate of subscriptions and we have to remember that the expense has to be born by the parent-association.

President:—Mr Graham has pointed out the position and it necessary to bear in mind that all expenses are borne by the parent-association, that if a country association decides to have a meeting that incurs any expense, it is met by this Association.

It is absolutely necessary to have a staff in order to cope with the work successfully. We must have a good staff if our country sub-associations are going to derive any great benefit from the Association. I am quite sure that we shall see if 4s rebate is fixed that we must curtail more or less the effective possibilities of this Association. We want to hear all your views on this matter, and I think if we express our views, we will be able to come to some decision.

Mr I. C. McRae:—If in the event of the amount of rebates being less than 4s will the parent-association make up any deficiency in the country sub-association's expenditure?

Mr Graham:—As far as that goes it is a question that has not been thought of to any great extent. I take it that if a rebate is fixed upon, and we will say for argument, please don't think I am trying to force it—you decide on 2s, and that at the end of the year the sub-association find that this has not been enough, and that they have incurred legitimate expenses above this, I think that any surplus of expenditure would be met by the association, but this is a question that has not been thoroughly thrashed out.

Mr McFeely:—I would like to say that the Tuatapere branch have brought this matter up repeatedly, we are sick of it and will be glad when it is finally settled.

The different discussions we have had on the matter have been considerably divided. Members in our branch regard 1s 6d rebate as being too low. At a meeting—we could call it a representative meeting, about 30 members being present—I took it that although they sent the delegates with a free open hand to base judgment according to arguments that were placed before us, they considered that 1s 6d rebate was insufficient.

Our branch differs from other branches. We have no club room at all, we hold our meetings in the Hall, and pay the small fee of 2s 6d. We generally hold a little social afterwards for an hour or two to defray any expenses incurred. In some cases the sub-branches are arranging club rooms. That in itself means a certain amount of expenditure, and the people locally will support it to a great extent, and I think that is one of the arguments that some of the delegates will use, that the rebate will be a considerable help. I want to say that at present we have no intention of having a club, but all the same it remains that a club is needed. It depends on finance, I am not going to say that our sub-association generally speaking, is in favour of 1s 6d. I cannot honestly say so.

Mr Cunningham:—I may state that the Tuatapere branch has had a very big fight up to the present time to keep its membership together. So far we have had no assistance, our expenses have been met out of social funds. If we received a larger rebate we could form club rooms, which would considerably help to keep our members together. Our present membership is 53 on the roll and about 20 or 30 to be put on to the roll, so we will have to do our best to try and get some club rooms or something. If we built a room it would keep the boys together and it would be something to come along for. They say, "I am not going to ride 15 miles to come along to

FURNITURE.

To those in search of Quality and Value, Inspect our Stock and get our Quotations. We carry the Largest Stocks in Invercargill, all of Our Own Manufacture. . .

W. STRANG & CO.,
THE LOCAL FURNITURE FIRM,
ESK & KELVIN STREETS, INVERCARGILL.



POULTRY NOTE

Shade is imperative, whether or made.

Just been reading that a Rhode Red is a "Hybrid." Hybrids will breed, which makes one doubt the merit, the Reds being highly prolific and hard to kill.

If you haven't given increased egg in your flock any consideration, right now. If you cannot see your clear to buy foundation stock of a reliable utility breeder of your own you can do the next best thing, some of your best females and use a male or males of some reliable breed of your variety that has bred for increased egg production, and you will be surprised quite often at the improvement the offspring from the first mating. In fact, it is by the introduction of that 75 per cent of the improvement both utility and fancy is practised to.

Moulting is a seasonable casting of feathers and preparing for the months with a full new covering, a natural process, and should not be interfered with in any drastic way. It can be helped by toning the birds up by frequent small doses of salts, and a spoonful of sulphur to every twenty about twice a week during fine weather, and a full supply of green food.

Breeding for increased egg production is no child's play, to establish a set along permanent lines that will reproduce and give high egg averages for the flock takes years to build up. Improvement along dependable and scientific lines does not come like volcanic upheavals, some laying claims would lead one to believe; it is rather like the slow rising of a tide. The object in breeding for increased egg production should be to lift the whole flock average together, may and should be gradual, and so built with the breeding bird lines, hens, pay and pay well for the effort put forward. To build a strain the very first essential is vitality for it takes surplus vitality to stand strain of heavy laying. Select the normal layers, the ones that lay at least a few eggs right through the moult, select males for your such rugged breeding, and don't be led by the chance hen that will outlay her sisters and switch off all breeding attention on her. Remember slogan I learned in the West when a boy working on some of the poultry plants. That was, that the station stock in many cases is better the product. That's why the leading hibition breeders, as a rule, can select their winners, and then beat you the year in competition. They know the ones that produce the same will apply to egg production. The birds that produce the same layers are the average high normal birds and as a rule the most able.

"No other domestic animal is so sensitive to environment as the laying hen," says an English countryman, and which is quite correct. She will pick her own place to roost, and go to bed, and go to lay, and she is also sensitive to her company. The system in competitions, which pens two together especially strangers to each other, is an unfair one to one of them, if not both, and must affect results.

It is considered doubtful if the Chinese native living who know the whole of the forty-four thousand birds that make up the Chinese

a meeting for a few minutes." Unless we have a club room the men will be all wandering away. The Tuatapere branch consider 3s rebate would be a fair thing.

Mr B. Brooks:—The Bluff branch I think are the furthest behind of any branch. I think the membership on the roll is 60 and about 20 to be added to that. These cover a big district, as we have Stewart Island included in the Bluff Association. According to the roll I received from Mr Graham a large number of our members are unfinancial. Well, I went around the majority of them to see what they were going to do. They said, "What is the use of paying up? What benefits do I get? If we can see something for it we will pay out."

The men do not think 1s 6d rebate is sufficient, they think that if we could get more we could build a club room. Practically every man would pay his 10s then. They say that if Mr McGorlick and myself came back with 1s 6d rebate it is absolutely hopeless. They are hard men to deal with down there. Unless you go round and bully them you can't get anything. You need a good man to do it. Personally I do not think I am good enough for it. They think 1s 6d is insufficient to do anything with.

Mr McGorlick:—The whole trouble arose from the visit of the Organiser. Although Mr Colquhoun is a good man, I do not think he put the position very clearly. I am afraid he did not speak as clearly as he might have done. He told us we would have to fill in two cards for every man we had. That we found out later was really wrong. It was only a few days ago that we realised we were a sub-association. We had a roll sent from Mr Graham, and we called a meeting at which there were only four present. In the limited time we had we could not do much. Of course we have a pretty hard crowd to deal with. If something could be done to bring them together we might be able to do something. I can assure you Mr Colquhoun left us with a very wrong impression.

Mr McFeely here made reference to the voting strength of the sub-associations compared with the voting strength of the parent-association.

Mr Cunningham:—Most of the country members are anxious to help the parent-association, but the whole trouble with the sub-associations at the present time is the lack of funds to do anything with definitely. So far we have not been able to give the secretary anything for his trouble. We have born all expenses out of social money.

President:—Country members think that they really get nothing out of the Association, as the town members have a fine club in which to play billiards, pool, etc., and they think we are living on their 10s. We are all working for the one thing, to better the condition of the soldier. That is the crux of the position.

Mr Graham:—In regard to the question of clubs for sub-associations, I would like you to understand that this is my personal opinion, the question of clubs for sub-associations is one that will require very careful consideration. When we talk about forming a club, immediately on doing that the social element is drawn in. When on Service there was no social spirit, we were all pals. Now we have got back to civilian life again, the social questions crops up. To form a club is good but there is that little thing at the back of it that has to be looked after.

Another thing I would point out and that I am rather strong on, is the benefits derived. Men ask, What benefit do we derive? No man derives 5 per cent., he derives 500 per cent. Through the Returned Soldiers' Association the soldier has got every privilege. A man asks what benefit does he derive. We have all had gratuities. Then we must remember the widowed mother's allowance, dependant's allowance, separation allowance, and also the fact that a great number of the unfortunate ones of us are receiving pensions. You can see that there is not one man who can honestly say, that we

have derived no benefits. If he says it he has not thought.

Another question is the position of the Soldiers' Club here, I admit it is rather a big one. In the first place the Soldiers' Club was started by the old National Reserve, and was ran by a purely civilian committee who collected a considerable amount of money for the support of it.

At the end of last year they handed over the management leaving the funds, some £2000 invested in trustees, and this money is to be expended at the rate of £200 per year. We have used over and above £200, but of course we must remember that this Association is not paying for lighting, fuel, or rent. As far as the club is concerned the funds of the association do not go into it. We hope that the independent club committee which has just been formed will put the club in a better position financially, and that we shall see a credit to the club funds, which are apart altogether from the R.S.A. funds.

Another point is the appointment of Land Adviser. Some little time ago there was an appointment made on the Land Purchase Board. That appointment was made by the District Council, not by the local Association.

Re the District Organiser, I am glad that the matter came up without my mentioning it. We can go back to the conference of last year in May, in Christchurch, when the scheme of organisation was first brought into being. I was sent from this association as their delegate and I was bound to oppose a scheme of organisation as laid down on the agenda. That scheme of organisation was thrown out and the present scheme was adopted, which was not as good a scheme as the one thrown out. I opposed both.

When the organiser was appointed he came down to Southland. He has worked hard and has done what he could. I quite agree with Mr McGorlick when he says that the position has not been properly explained. It is very far from perfect, and it is only by asking questions that the thing can be got down to bedrock.

We could then understand the organisation better, but still I think it wants a tremendous amount of improvement.

It was moved by Mr McFeely and seconded by Mr Macrae that the amount of rebate be 2s.

Mr Cunningham asked if the sub-association would have to supply stationery, etc., out of that.—To be decided later.

LAND ADVISER.

It was suggested to put up candidates for the position of Land Adviser.

Mr Macrae asked when the nominations were to be in, and was informed that they must be in by the 10th of next month.

Mr McFeely said that the Tuatapere branch could nominate one man who was a practical farmer and had sound common sense.

It was decided that nominations be received from the sub-branches for the position of Land Adviser.

Mr McFeely moved that the final selection of a candidate be left to the Invercargill Executive. This was seconded by Mr Crowther.—Carried.

Mr Blake then spoke in regard to "The Digger." He said, "I want the soldiers in the country to take a real live interest in their paper. There are a large number of agents throughout Southland. We want you to mention the paper, and use it, as it is part of your organisation, and if there is a requisite amount of recognition of those who advertise in our columns it cannot fail to succeed and be an important factor in R.S.A. affairs. I want you to go away from here with an interest in the paper."

A vote of thanks was given to the chairman for the satisfactory way he explained the position.