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FOR THE EMPIRE'S CAUSE. IN MEMORIAM.

EVERETT.—In loving memory of our dear brother (Jack), Trooper John Everett, 53994, wounded July 25 and drowned in the Hospital ship Warilda (torpedoed in the English Channel), on August 3, 1918.—Inserted by those who love and sadly miss him. 3662

"The Digger."

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 1920.

THE LAND QUESTION.

The assurance of the Hon. Minister of Lands, that the Government is doing its best for returned soldiers, is no doubt an expression propelled by honesty of purpose. Nevertheless, the Government's Land Policy has been reproductive of a large measure of disappointment. Not long after the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act came into existence, there gradually grew a widespread opinion that too high a price was being paid for the land, further, that there was a class of landowner who could foresee what legislation made no effort to check—an opportunity to accelerate the law of supply and demand with the natural corollary, an inflation of values. The small farmer who joined the land gamble merely took advantage of an already existing set of conditions which had its origin with the class of land-owner previously referred to.

At the same time, this action of the small farmer made an automatic contribution on pre-war values, and recent activity provision is made for compulsory acquisition of pre-war values, and recent activity has raised the consideration as to whether these landowners are prepared to be taxed on the price they are now asking for land. However, the present set of conditions is due to economic law. Quite so! When the disintegrating factors of justice are given free play, instead of providing an effective check to them, and directing economic activity along channels which

will produce an effective and efficient land policy. In addition to its economic result there is also another phase to be considered.

We have passed through troublesome times, a period when German aggression crossed the threshold of Belgium under the guise of "Kultur." Had this aggression been successfully prosecuted, there would have been a disastrous depreciation of values instead. But what prevented these conditions from existing? What kept land values up? The soldiers who stood on the fire-step and suffered privations, and who, at any moment, may have made the supreme sacrifice in preserving for future generations "the things that matter for a nation," and as relative to our theme the preservation of land values as a natural consequence. This enabled an era of prosperity to take place, for which, to be guilty of repetition, the soldiers were daily making the sacrifice. Can the R.S.A. be considered guilty of going to the extremes for asking that these considerations be associated with the evolution of economic law, and ask that they should be enabled to purchase land on the 1914 valuation. It is fair and reasonable request and will appeal to all thoughtful persons who do not place shekels of silver before common justice. It was shown at the last Annual Conference, that there were still 6,000 men who were in search of land. They too must pay the penalty of the Government's neglect. The R.S.A. have always been doubtful of the operations of Land Purchase Boards and have consistently asked the Government to create the machinery frequently asked for in the columns of this journal. The cash transaction of the Government leaves it open for pressure being brought to bear upon the Board, and cannot be regarded as an effective piece of machinery, and the high price being paid for land will have a reaction upon the soldier settler when land values become more stabilised. The small farmer, and principally the small dairy farmer, is not doing so well as generally believed; if you deduct the price he gets for his produce and the amount which may reasonably be credited to his family, then the high price paid, makes it more difficult for him to preserve a reasonable margin of profit after rent, and interest, etc., have been paid. The position as indicated in the Waitara "Mail" recently, seems to satisfactorily express the position:—

"It is not at all certain that when the Government buys improved land at £100 per acre for the returned soldier to dairy on, they are acting kindly by him. By the time the man is ready to make the area productive his yearly output for, say, 50 acres of the presumably high quality soil would be in the region of £600, and it is hard to see how even with the best herd and the most skilful management, his revenue will be very much beyond that figure. A Waikato case cited the other day showed that a practical farmer earning £924 from 164 acres had to outlay all but £98 of that amount without allowing anything for the services of himself, wife, and three children. The man worked from daylight to dark, and his wife had broken down through work. He was only able to make both ends meet by the fact that he bought his farm ten years ago, when the price was much below the present Government valuation. His improvements capitalised and the unearned increment ought to give him a good margin should he desire to sell, but possibly he wants a place to bring his children up on; and if he sold and rebought, he probably would have to part up with all that he had made, so that a change in that respect would be of no advantage. The speculator pure and simple, however, has in most cases made a heap of money during the boom."

This speculative activity has been one of the greatest disintegrating factors in the operations under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, while the speculators themselves have been carried on the banners of patriotism as having contributed (sometimes by compulsion) to the various war loans. These contributions have lost the quality of sacrifice owing to the rate of interest involved.

OF INTEREST TO FARMERS.

Attention is drawn to an advertisement appearing in our casual columns. Messrs Shiels and Jenkins have removed from the buildings recently occupied by them in Dee street to more convenient ones at the rear of the Club Hotel, with entrances from both Dee and Leven streets. The firm are now in a more favoured position to deal with the ever-expanding demand for the famous Storrie Improved Milking Machine. The last year's output of this machine has increased eight fold, which shows that the machine is very popular among farmers. The principals of the firm will always be ready to give a demonstration, and farmers should see this demonstration before purchasing elsewhere.

FOOTBALL NOTES.

EASTERN DISTRICT (12) V. COMBINED WEDNESDAY (11).

(Blue). (Blue and Black).

The teams were:—

Eastern District: Backs: Moore, Scully, Robertson, Holmes, MacGibbon, O'Kane, Johnson; forwards: Bannie, Duncan, Christie, Macalister, Scott, Crombie, Adamson, McIntyre.

Town: Backs: Lilley, Brown, Lyttle, Coakley, Vial, Cleland, Davidson; forwards: Smith, McKenzie, Roche, Sparks, Whyte, Strang, Millar and Fougere.

A good crowd watched this game, and the merits and demerits of players were freely criticised, the supporters of Southland Rugby wondering whether the province could get a team to stave off a crushing defeat from Canterbury on the 11th August. Gore began well, but their first attempt at passing found them uncertain of foot, and that plus a high punt put Wednesday on attack, Sparks being jersey-held while dribbling. A try should have been awarded. Lilley made it three. Wednesday 3. Gore were still uncertain, and Holmes and Scully, winners of the visitors let Wednesday into position, Lilley, full, getting across. Wednesday 6. Local forwards took a hand, Roche appearing. Bad tackling of first-five O'Kane brought Eastern into the last stretch. Here a free, a fine cross of Holmes to the other wing set up a pretty transfer movement, four backs handling, MacGibbon ending like a flash. Wednesday 6, Eastern 3. The local forwards broke the visitors' line and headed by Roche, Miller and Fougere backing, the team moved up to the line, and on the ball being thrown out from the corner, Smith took cleanly and dived across. Lilley goal. Wednesday 11, Eastern 3. From this on only the Wednesday forwards, Brown and Davidson backs, and the Eastern team were in the game. The Town backs never looked dangerous, they were tossed about like nine-pins, their passing was slow, and they did not look to be in any way aggressive, though the first-five cut in well a few times. The backs seemed feeble in comparison with Eastern rear-guard. Any attack of merit came from Wednesday forwards, who over-kicked repeatedly. Moore full, and Mailey centre, put up a fine record of taking on the full and of defence kicking, while O'Kane and MacGibbon turned defence into attack several times with unpleasant results to Wednesday backs. Eastern scored two more tries in the first spell, the last ten minutes of which the game was theirs. The lock, McAllister, dived for one, and the winger, McIntyre, received in-feed for the other. The ground defence of the Wednesday backs on their own line was shockingly weak. The first spell finished with Wednesday 11, Eastern 9.

The most of the second spell was Eastern's, if we except the forward rushes. The visiting scrummers were most resourceful on the line though their packing was not so solid as that of their opponents. Twenty times they broke through the lines. What forwards were failing to tackle their man? Sparks bashed through a line and headed on lone-headedly, but he couldn't prevent his over-kick losing him thirty yards when Mailey got it. The Wednesday forwards certainly lacked finish, and if Smith hadn't got the ball for the backs, what would Eastern have done to the backs opposed to them? For their winning try Eastern got amongst the confused home backs and were penalised. Then a poor kick brought Scully through a line, with centre Mailey to receive and dive over. Eastern placing for goals was weak. Eastern 12, Wednesday 11.

SOUTHLAND TEAM.

The selectors have chosen the following representative fifteen to play Canterbury on August 11th:—

Full-back: I. Brown (Otatau).
Holmes (Pioneer), Gilmour (Banks and Law), Fortune (Service).
Stead (Banks and Law) Capt., MacGibbon (Eastern).
Davidson (Invercargill).
Forwards:
Smith (Star), Barry (Eastern).
Sparks (Athletic).
Roche (Athletic), Whyte (Waikato).
Cockroft (Union), Millar (Invercargill).
Winger: Potter (Bluff).
Emergencies: Backs—O'Kane (Eastern), J. Dalgleish (Service). Forwards—Lang-bien (Service), Duggan (Western).

The following team will play the representative team on Saturday:—
Lilley.
Lyttel, Coakley, Brown (Star)
J. Dalgleish, Vial
Dawson (Waikato).

Forwards:
Cameron, McKenzie, Todd.
Smith (Union), Trembath (Bluff), Sproat (Service), Tall (Bluff).
Winger: Agnew (Star).
Emergencies: Backs—O'Connell, George, Prain. Forwards—D. Murray (Union), Stobo, Leith.
All players listed meet at High School Gymnasium Fridays and Mondays, 7 p.m.

THE SOUTHLAND TEAM AND OTHERS.

In. Out.
Full, I. Brown (Western); B. MacGibbon (Eastern).
The Western man was chosen probably as he was against a Saturday back attack the Wednesday effort being poor. Out-takes and clearly out-kicks Brown. Wing-three Holmes (Eastern). No more even though he did not show to advantage on Wednesday. Has foot and body. Wing-three: Fortune (Satan's); B. MacGibbon (Western).

Fortune's condition and his unwilling punting puts him behind Eade, who excels in experience. McDonald, if available, should put either out.

Centre: Gilmour, rival Robertson (Bluff), if sound, and Mailey (Eastern), attack and defence do not possess anything that rival Gilmour's brilliance in attack. Brown (Wednesday) is a fine centre, and may be brilliant late.

Second-five: Stead (Saturday), MacGibbon (Eastern), who played as a centre five on Wednesday has all Stead's qualities, with tackle and rush-stop immensely superior. The positions have been argued for that end two non-defenders have been included in the team. Put you mind to attack.

First-five: D. MacGibbon (Eastern), O'Kane (Eastern). As a combination in their own places, these two left the Town backs standing. MacGibbon is not, in less, and plucky. His skill was evident even on the wet ground. His tackling will cover some of the weakness of his fellow-backs.

Half-back: Davidson (Wednesday), rival J. Dalgleish (Saturday). After the game played by Dalgleish in front of Stead, Gilmour, and Fortune, when he did all the defence, and opened up as much attack as his wretched pack would let him, it must remain a mystery why he is out of the combination. Davidson did well in the Eastern-Wednesday match; he is not to be compared with Dalgleish in any department of the game; and he did get some protection from his pack.

Winger: Potter (Saturday), rival Agnew (Wednesday). Two good sound men, with Agnew more versatile.

Front Row: Smith (Wednesday), no rival. His hooking in the Star-Blue final, and in the Eastern-Wednesday match settles any doubt. His general forward play is excellent for a man of his build. Barry (Eastern). We know little of his front row work this season; but he is a fine forward, and was the youngest scrummer in the Southland team of 1914.

Lock: Sparks (Wednesday). In position he would do; but he must not feed to the enemy's backs.

Supports: Roche (Wednesday). There's only one Roche. No other forward in Southland has this season shown Roche's line work, smothering, and packing. He feeds the opposing backs with over-kicks. Whyte (Wednesday). Given a sound ankle, Whyte is a forward true to type: line, follow, loose, tackle—all he delights in. He must not kick hard unless high or to the line.

Back-row: Cockroft. Given conditions, this man should justify his inclusion. Southland has not seen him at nearly his best, and many admirers will be watching him for a great game against Canterbury. Taking, kicking, smothering, and line work, are his strong points; and, in the company of determined men like Roche and Whyte, he should satisfy those who are hungry to see him play his best. (Wednesday). In dribbling has no rival here. Is short for the line and has a body impact.
The forwards have been picked with the evident intention of training them as a line and as scrum, to do this the selectors must have the men here; otherwise Pop-ham (Western), Crombie and McIntyre (Western), might have had a chance. The selectors have every good wish for their team from "The Digger."

The Prize Court has awarded £20,000 prize bounty in respect of the Battle of Jutland to the 151 ships engaged.

So the good folk at Bluff have been attending to matters associated with the Bluff Horticultural Society. The "Bluff Press" states, "A strong committee was also appointed to 'carry' through the social." Through where? and why? give date and time of arrival?