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"The Digger."

FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1920.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Annual Conference is being held
earlier this year than usual. There are
no doubt reasons for holding it prior to
the opening of Parliament especially in
view of the "Go-Slow Policy" of the
Government in giving practical effect to
the provisions of the "Discharged Sol-
diers' Settlement Act." The news that
the Conference was being held came as a
surprise, especially when the notification
was within 10 days of the Conference be-
ing held. The Invercargill Association
rightly protested against this procedure
and decided to forward the follow-
ing remit:—"That at least one
month's notice be given of the date fixed
for the Conference." If the early date
was influenced by the attitude of the
Minister of Lands in limiting the amount
of money available for soldier settlement,
then there is no reason why some notifica-
tion of the Conference could not have been
given at least three weeks before, thus
giving time for country sub-associations to
have a meeting, and formulated some use-
ful remit for consideration by the Con-
ference. Unless the Conference supports
the Invercargill remit, the position will be
in effect, to disfranchise the country sub-
associations or at least to lead to ill-con-
sidered remits.

Possibly one of the greatest problems
the Conference will have to deal with is
the land question, and time spent in dis-
cussion would be time well spent. The
Land Committee have brought down a
lengthy report for consideration, but the
position to-day demands that not only
shall Conference formulate and adopt a
land policy, but to what extent shall the
various associations be a propelling force
behind that policy. It is time that the
R.S.A. throughout New Zealand woke up
and displayed more energy and made
themselves a real force behind the R.S.A.
policy. Headquarters would also be
well advised to pay more attention to the
real objects for which the R.S.A. exists in-
stead of the legal quibbles which hold up the
provisions for an alteration in the scheme
of organisation for twelve months. Time
is passing and the R.S.A. have not un-
limited time at their disposal to bring into
the realm of practical effect, provisions of
land settlement which will be of benefit
to both the returned soldier and the Dom-
inion's production. The present machinery
for the administration of the Discharged
Soldiers' Settlement Act was never brought
into being for that purpose, and a large

amount of the dissatisfaction which ex-
ists is the logical outcome of cumbersome
machinery. It is not fair to the Lands
Department, and is the source of dis-
satisfaction amongst returned men. The
Land Boards have not the same facilities
financially or otherwise that mercantile
companies have, and this leads to endless
delay. The sooner the administration of
the Act is placed under the jurisdiction of
a separate body, the better for all con-
cerned. The report of the Land Com-
mittee is one that seems to have had care-
ful consideration, and there is no doubt
that Lieut-Col. Mitchell will be a decided
force behind it.

"THE DIGGER."

The deliberations of the Conference will
cover a very wide field, and judging from
correspondence from the management com-
mittee of "Quick March," "The Digger,"
which the official organ of the Invercargill
Returned Soldiers' Association will appear
before the Conference, but not as "A
Daniel come to judgment," as the corres-
pondence would indicate. The delegates
to the Conference have been asked to
come "fully primed" in the matter of "The
Digger," but it is not expected that the
Conference will spend much time on the
question of whether the Invercargill As-
sociation should continue its enterprising
characteristics in publishing "The Digger"
or not. It is purely a question for the
local Association to decide. It is a pity
that this point has not been fully realised
by the management committee. Our view
is that there is plenty of room for all,
and we have no grouse against "Quick
March" as the national paper. At the
same time the position is one that calls
for frankness, and that assuredly expresses
itself in a verdict of "no jurisdiction."

LAND BOARD ELECTION.

The contest for the vacant seat on the
Land Board is being keenly contested,
and has aroused more interest in this
election than those held previously. The
Executive of the Invercargill R.S.A. con-
sidered the question of the method of vot-
ing, and sent a remit to Conference sug-
gesting that the signed envelope would
be a greater factor in ensuring the secrecy
of the ballot than the present method
signing the voting paper. In fact, the
whole system wants reorganising, and
Conference should devote a good deal of
time to this important question.

There is one thing that Crown settlers
should do in exercising their vote, and
that is to mark the envelope "Voting
Paper." Failure to do this will mean
that the voting paper will be opened as
ordinary correspondence and thus dis-
close the voting. We are confident that
the Land Board staff are doing the right
thing with these papers, but it should
not happen, and every voter should receive
a printed envelope specially marked. So
far as public opinion can be relied upon,
it would seem that Colonel Hargest cannot
fail to be placed at the top of the poll.
In fact, he is the most representative can-
didate seeking election.

The duties of the Land Board are of
such a nature that no candidate must
represent only one section of the voters,
and as the functions of the Land Board
deal with soldier settlement and Crown
tenants whose land is not affected by the
operation of the Discharged Soldier's
Settlement Act, it is imperative in the
interests of efficiency and impartial judg-
ment that the candidate represent both
sections. This Colonel Hargest does,
having controlled the working of a Crown
holding practically all his life. In addi-
tion to this he is a soldier who has played
his part well, and has a distinguished war
service. His service on the Land Pur-
chase Board will stand him in good stead,
and on the whole every confidence can
be placed on him to act in the interests of
every class of the community, and not
confine his activities to one particular
section, whether they be returned soldiers
or otherwise. The object of the R.S.A.
in supporting Colonel Hargest's candidature
is not one governed by personal motives.
It has always been a matter of policy with
the Association to secure representation
on a Board which deals with its affairs.
As matters stand at present the soldiers
have no representative, notwithstanding
the fact that the bulk of the work that
the Board has to deal with is "soldier
settlement." This is decidedly unfair,
and to adjust this position Colonel Har-
gest is the official nominee of a united
Southland.

SOUTHLAND'S PART IN THE WAR.

The "Digger" would like to receive in-
formation from officers and other ranks re-
garding the above. Extracts from diaries
and other items are urgently required
for the writer of these articles. It is re-
quested that all matter especially regard-
ing early history be sent to the Editor as
soon as possible.

THE PRINCE AND "THE DIGGER."

INVERCARGILL.

20th May, 1920.

The Managing Editor, "The Digger,"

"Southland News" Buildings, Invercargill.

Sir,—The Prince of Wales very much appreciates your kind
suggestion that he should send a farewell message to "The
Digger." His Royal Highness has had, however, to make a rule
against sending messages to particular papers, because he must
be fair to all, and much regrets, therefore, that he cannot comply
with your request. He proposes, however, to send a message of
farewell to the whole people of New Zealand before he sails, and
this will reach you in a very few hours.

He wishes "The Digger" a prosperous and successful career.
I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) G. W. M. GRICE,

Lieutenant-Colonel.

Secretary to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

GENERAL BIRDWOOD'S VISIT.

The Invercargill R.S.A. have sent the following communica-
tion by wireless to General Birdwood, who arrives in the Dom-
inion on Wednesday next:—

"Two thousand Diggers welcome you to Invercargill and to a
smoke concert to be held in your honour on Tuesday, June the
8th. This date is consistent with your itinerary.

D. RAE,

"President Invercargill R.S.A."

THE DIGGER'S LETTER BOX.

M.C.F., Otaguti.—Many thanks for your
notes, which are always welcome. Please let
us have notes not later than Wednesday
afternoon. Glad to note that you are all
pushing "The Digger," and that our
agent, Mr Steans, of Wainawa, is a real
live agent.—Edt.

To Olga, Age 13.—Your children's
story is really very good and we will
publish it. We would also like any of
your girl friends to send in a story. We
are very glad to note that you read the
"Children's Column."—Edt.

(To the Editor.)

Sir.—Re the Prince's visit to Invercar-
gill, there was one incident which caused
me much surprise. It happened in front
of the Grand Hotel where the Guard of
Honour was waiting the Prince's return
from the show grounds. They were told
to discard their overcoats and all rushed
away, including the two sergeants, and
left the Standard and the Lieutenant who
was holding it without guard whatever.
As it is the one thing in the army which
every man is expected to stand by till the
last, and as a soldier who has seen service
in Gallipoli and France, I am surprised
that some abler pen than mine has not
written on this matter before.—I am etc.,
ONE RED AND FOUR BLUE
CHEVRONS,
Invercargill, May 25, 1920.

RE BUILDING SOCIETY ELECTION.

(To the Editor.)

Sir.—The voting papers are now in the
hands of the shareholders and as in the
past the retiring directors are afforded a
most unfair advantage over the rest of
the candidates standing by having their
names repeated in large type among the
instructions on the voting paper. While
it is the usual thing to see the retiring
directors names on a balance sheet, it is
uncalled for and probably illegal on the
voting paper. This is an unfair privilege
and gives the retiring directors a lever
that they are certainly not entitled to
amounting to practically a block vote.

It is to be hoped that all shareholders
will carefully scrutinise their voting paper
and give every candidate whose name ap-
pears in the voting paper fair considera-
tion before they exercise their vote. If
they do they might come to the conclu-
sion that a change would possibly prove
beneficial. As recently pointed out one
of the retiring directors who is also offer-
ing his services holds the position of chair-
man on a rival society. Surely this
should not be so.

Shareholders have a wide choice on this
occasion as there are several energetic and
capable young men offering their services.
This is an age of progress and the Society
offers plenty of scope for improvement in
some of its conservative methods. Trusting
that a large vote will be recorded on this
occasion.—I am etc.,

SHAREHOLDER.

Invercargill, May 27, 1920.

SATISFIED OR —?

(To the Editor.)

Sir.—The long-looked for, and all too
short visit of the Prince of Wales has
come and gone, and the people of South-

land must be keenly disappointed that the
authorities who arranged the Royal tour
allowed for such a brief stay in Invercar-
gill. Originally it was intended that the
Prince should spend a night here, but this
was cancelled, and it would be interesting
to know if our City Fathers made any ap-
test. Why is it that Invercargill never
receives a "square deal"? We wish
to believe it was imperative that the
Prince should leave Invercargill the same
night, but we now find we were wrong
in order that a prominent citizen of this
church should have the honour of accom-
panying His Royal Highness for a day
after the Cathedral City had already been
allotted three or four days. Wangarua,
Napier, and Hokitika were each favoured
with a longer stay than Invercargill and
the question arises—why? For most North
Islanders, New Zealand ends at Dunedin,
and while on a visit to that city, the
writer met a visitor from the north, who
in referring to the chief cities in New
Zealand, asked if Invercargill was a
"Hamlet." We know that most visitors
from the north are rather surprised to
find on arrival, that Invercargill is a well
laid out town with a fair sized population.
It is becoming more noticeable every day
that if we would hold our own with other
towns, then we must not be afraid to let
our voice be heard, and surely we have
many public-spirited citizens in our midst
who will give a lead whenever the oppor-
tunity arises. By not visiting the Lakes
the Prince of Wales missed one of New
Zealand's beauty spots, and one wonders
if Auckland had had these wonderful
lakes at her door would she have allowed
the opportunity to pass. Rouse your-
selves, Oh! ye City Fathers and repre-
sentatives of Invercargill, for if we are
content to go and accept just what the
authorities like to give us, instead of de-
manding that which is in keeping with
the size of the town, then we are in
danger of losing our present position as
sixth city in the Dominion.—I am, etc.,
P. GIBB.

Invercargill, 26th May, 1920.

Mr W. G. Boyce has now taken over
the business of tyre repairing generally
carried on by Messrs Boyce and Fleming
in Kelvin street. All classes of motor
tyres and tubes are repaired by a new
vulcanising process imported from Amer-
ica. Tyres that were previously discarded
can now be effectively repaired and be a
decided saving to motorists. Mr Boyce
will be pleased to interview anyone in-
terested at his business address, Kelvin
street.

Another Digger has made a start in
Invercargill. Mr C. E. Gibb has bought
the business of fruiterer, confectioner,
etc., situated at the corner of Yarrow and
Dee street. The place has been thorough-
ly renovated and neatly arranged. There
is ample accommodation upstairs for the
latter rooms which, in addition to its attrac-
tive surroundings, have a splendid view.
There is no doubt that Mr Gibb will
receive a fair share of public support,
and his premises being the home of refuge
for those desirous of having a dainty
afternoon tea. An advertisement to this
effect appears in our columns.