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Casual Advertisements—One insertion, 4/- per inch; 3/- per inch for each subsequent insertion (prepaid).

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Memorial Notices—For notice only, 3/6; notice with verse, 3/6, plus 6d per line for each verse.

Wanted, Lost and Found—1/- for one insertion of sixteen words.

IN MEMORIAM.

BALLANTYNE.—In loving memory of Private Alexander Stuart Ballantyne (Toot), 7th Reinforcements, who died from wounds received in France, 13th July, 1916.

Sleep on, dear Alex., your battles are over,
In a far off land you lie;
For freedom's cause you nobly fought,
And a brave soldier you have died.

—Inserted by his mother, father, sister, and brothers.

"The Digger."

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1920.

LAND FOR SOLDIERS.

The vigorous attack made by Mr Mitchell, M.P., for Wellington South, on the Government's land settlement policy is one which will be readily appreciated by every returned soldier who has given a moment's consideration to the operations of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act. Not very long after this Act came into force a feeling of insecurity began to exist which is every day becoming more apparent. The public have apparently regarded legislative enactments dealing with soldier settlement as a piece of machinery which was of untold benefit to the soldiers. Any complaints by associations have frequently been regarded as grumbling and have fallen upon deaf ears. Although we do not wish to associate the "Dominion" with this attitude of the public, because we are sure that the majority of the people are at least above "political bias," nevertheless the "Dominion" thinks that at a time when complaints are being raised on all sides it is perhaps not surprising that returned soldiers should add something to the chorus. This state of mind always has a prejudicial effect and obscures sound reason and judgment, and is not a progressive factor making for the adjustment of the various difficulties which exist. This is not a party question as far as

returned soldiers are concerned. It is the mere fact that the land settlement policy has failed to provide adequate security for the settler. Mr Mitchell's strong condemnation of the Land Purchase Boards is consistent with the attitude of every association throughout the Dominion. The R.S.A. have never felt that the Government was buying land at a price giving a reasonable factor of safety for the settler. Mr Mitchell instances a case where a southern estate owner who fought to keep his son away from the war, received £10 per acre for his land, and the Government settled it at £11. The land was so poor that the settlers were now unable to make it pay. A large number of soldiers have been settled on land which is poor and unable to hold grass for any length of time. They have paid the war-inflated value on land that they fought to protect and the consequent reaction will be that when industries become more stabilised they will have to approach the Government for a decrease in the rent or else go to the wall. An estate at Eketahuna of 10,138 acres was bought by the Government for £81,000. Its rateable value was £19,000, and capital value £44,000, so the Government paid £37,000 more than the value of the land. When they settled there the valuation was raised 38 per cent. The former owner used to pay £158 in rates, but the soldiers had to pay £600. This is a striking illustration of the Government's land settlement policy. These are the conditions which the R.S.A. are aware of, and are fighting not only in the interests of the soldier, but that of the State. In Taranaki a speculating parasite bought land at £35 per acre and sold it at £45 to returned soldiers. While the men were standing on the first step they were preserving intact the landed interests of this speculator, and others who did nothing more than exploit the nations calamity, and yet any opposition from returned soldiers is regarded as grumbling. On other occasions the Wellington daily has regarded R.S.A. activity as one of grumbling, but the "Dominion" is so tied up in the realm of party politics that we do not expect the propagation of our claims in its columns so long as we find fault with any phase of departmental muddling. However, returned men know from experience what is the practical outcome of the administration of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, and are not likely to be influenced by its attempt to camouflage the real situation. The Association has endeavoured to arrest the attention of members of Parliament by the submission of a land settlement policy which would ensure effective repatriation, but so far the Government have followed the old track, and inflated values antagonistic to the welfare of the soldier is the result. The R.S.A. have advocated the cutting up of large estates, beginning with those of £100,000 and over in value and proceeding in order of magnitude until the demand is satisfied. Throughout this country there are large tracts of land which is not in its full state of productivity and closer settlement is needed. If the present owners will not sell, then put into operation the compulsory clauses of the 1908 Act. These estates should be tabulated and acquired at pre-war value and thus soldiers would not be purchasing at war inflated values of an unstable character. Greater advances should be made to men taking up virgin country. The Commissioner of Crown Lands in Wellington recently stated, that men who had taken up virgin bush country were making splendid progress and had already felled and grassed 10,000 acres, all of which was now carrying stock. On the other hand the purchase of separate farms has tended to inflate values. Here we have 1,000 acres of what was hitherto unproductive land brought into a state of production, and likewise the settlement of men on estates would be a factor in increasing production, and not inflate values. Here again it has to be considered whether it is advisable to take experienced men off the land and allow them to join the land gamble through the Government cash transaction. The occupation of the land we have referred to not only ensures increased production, but offers returned soldiers their best chance of attaining secure independence. On the other hand to establish men on highly improved land is bound to entail a decline, temporarily at least, in production and at the same time imposes on soldier settlers at the outset of their career on the land a maximum financial handicap.

Grocer robbed! It is a great pity for anybody to be robbed, but that Mr Baxter, the well-known cash grocer who takes every opportunity to reduce the cost of living, by lowering the price of groceries, should be robbed of his greatest pleasure in selling sugar at such low rates as to sweeten the whole community at least cost, seems scarcely fair. Mr Baxter, however, we understand, intends selling the sweetest honey and other commodities to compensate being robbed of his former pleasure of selling sugar much below tariff.

AN APPRECIATION.

Another appreciation of "The Digger" is to hand. Colonel Pow, who is now occupying the position of general secretary to the New Zealand Soldiers' Association, writes as follows:—

"First of all allow me to congratulate you on your A1 production—it is a really live paper."

"From time to time I will send you information that will prove valuable for insertion."

SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL.

Matters in connection with a soldier's memorial for Otantau are well in hand, and the design is of a non-utilitarian character. It was decided to adopt the design of Mr Fraser, at a cost of £925. The chairman (Mr E. Harrington), and Messrs J. G. Baker, R. Seatter and L. Thompson were appointed a committee to supervise erection.

OF INTEREST TO SOLDIERS.

The following letter has been received and is published for general information.

Dear Sir,—In connection with the representations of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association regarding the ejection of returned soldiers from rented properties and the protection afforded under the War Regulations Act of 1914, I have pleasure in advising that notice has been given, by the Prime Minister, of the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill, and that this will contain a clause extending the legislation above referred to for a further period of twelve months.

This information is forwarded to you thinking that same will be of interest to some of your readers.—Yours etc.,

J. POW,
General Secretary.

CITIZENS' BALL.

We are glad to note the feeling of good fellowship existing between the public and returned men. We have always felt that R.S.A. activities on Anzac Day could not fail to show the people that we stood solidly for good citizenship. General Birdwood's visit was another score, and it is hoped that the R.S.A. will always maintain those good relations which must be a factor in securing public opinion as a power behind the R.S.A. when they are fighting for their legitimate rights, which after all, is fair dues to the soldiers widows and children, the maimed, and those who have been dislodged from employment during the great European war. The citizens of Invercargill have stood loyally behind the soldier during the great conflict, and are now inviting all returned men to a ball to be held towards the end of the month. The ball will be advertised later, but the question of sending invitations is impracticable. Men have changed addresses and some are likely to be missed. The invitations will be by advertisement and all returned men are asked to watch the papers for details.

SOLDIERS' LAND BALLOTS.

PREFERENCE TO LIMBLESS MEN.

The matter of preference at soldiers' land ballots to limbless men was discussed at a meeting of those so afflicted last evening, and the following motion was carried:—"That this meeting expresses its desire to co-operate with T.B. soldiers to secure preference at future ballots where sections are considered to be suitable for limbless and T.B. soldiers."

Although the price of rabbit skins has fallen substantial cheques are still being made.

Sale-rousing values at our big Reliability Sale. Come in and see these supreme values. Over 500 pieces striped flannel-ette to select from. These prices are much below the present manufacturers' cost. Ten pieces only dark flannel-ette, 27in wide, usual price 1s 6d, sale price 1s; 200 pieces striped flannel-ette, 29in to 30in wide, usual price 1s 9d to 2s 6d, sale price 1s 3d to 1s 11d; 280 pieces best quality flannel-ette, procurable in Horrockses and other famous makes, usual price 2s 11d, 3s 6d, sale price 2s 6d, 2s 11d; white flannel-ette, 29in wide, sale price 1s 6d, 1s 11d; best white flannel-ette procurable, sale price 2s 6d, 2s 11d. Colonial pure wool blankets for double beds, sale price 55s. A few only mill reject blankets, large sizes, 45s and 49s 6d. Doctor flannel in all colours, sale price 3s 11d to 4s 11d. We are confident a visit of inspection will repay you at the Progressive Stores, where supreme values are being offered daily. H. and J. Smith, Ltd., Tay street, Invercargill and Main street, Gore.

WAIRO JOCKEY CLUB.

ANNUAL SMOKE CONCERT.

The members of the Wairo Jockey Club held their annual smoke concert in the Coronation Hall at Nightcaps last Friday. Despite the wet night there was a good attendance, members coming from all parts of the district, and a party of visitors motored out from Invercargill. The president, Mr Thomas Todd, occupied the chair. During the evening many interesting features of the club's activity came to light and there was evidence of that friendly feeling existing which is essential in any club if it is going to make progress. Frequent reference was made to Mr Nathaniel Bates, who had the proud record of being president of the club for 21 years. He was the type of man the club could ill afford to lose and the valuable work done by him and the committee during those early days of the Club's existence could not fail to be appreciated. Mr Todd has also held this office for a number of years, and it speaks well for the Wairo Club that they are able to work together for the welfare of the Club. The secretary (Mr W. A. Saunders) gave some interesting details of the early days of the Club. The Club held its first meeting on March 2, 1892, when there were eight races and 110sovs in stakes. The amount put through the totalisator on that occasion was £520. The opening event was an open hurdle race and won by the present clerk of the course at Riverton, who at that time was huntsman to the Birchwood Hounds. The distance was two miles over a chipped track, taking 4min 54 1-5secs. The Maiden Plate was won by Johnny, but he was disqualified because he had won a race at Riccarton. The race was given a Kingbird, ridden by Joe Blee. In those good old days the stakes were very small, the Wairo Cup being £20 for a distance of two miles. Juno, a locally owned mare, won the race with R. Telford as rider. Parvula won the Flying Handicap, Fairy Queen won the mile hack race of 1 1/4 miles. Gardenia won the Consolation race of one mile. A three mile trot was won by Polly in 11 minutes 49 1/2 seconds. The following year there were ten races, the meeting being held in February. Caddal won the open hurdles of two miles in 4 minutes 42 seconds. Billy scored the Wairo Cup of two miles in 3min 59 1/2sec, being ridden by his owner, S. Brennan. On this occasion Watermark won the Flying Handicap with R. Telford on his back, and J. Telford won with Johnny in the District Race. T. Aiken rode Banshee in the three mile Trot in 9min 55sec. A present day committeeman and steward of the Club (Jack Walsh) won two races that day—the Maiden Plate with Jenny and the Hospital Race with Tyrant. The Club now gives £1000 in stakes and putting £10,000 through the totalisator and contributes £500 per annum to the Government. These interesting items indicating the progress of the Club, reflect great credit on the committee, whom Mr Saunders stated had done a large amount of voluntary work.

In replying to the toast of the Owners and Breeders' Association the Grieve considered that all owners and breeders should belong to the Association and make themselves a force felt in racing matters. By unity of action they could remedy the present unsatisfactory racing conditions. The Association should have its representatives at the Racing Conference and should endeavour to have a Metropolitan Club in Invercargill, as Southland was in the position to manage its own affairs. Bill then put the acid on to the owners and breeders present and as far as we could judge muzzled the lid of them as members.

Mr W. Taylor, in proposing the toast "of Parliament," said it was a good thing for clubs to come together and have free intercourse in matters associated with racing. As far as Parliament was concerned—well, I don't like them? The policy of the Liberal Government was the only one which met the requirements of the moment. Labour had a lot to thank the Liberal Government for as it had always stood for the interests of the workers. What was wanted to-day was for our politics to gravitate back to the Liberalism of the Ballance and Seddon administration. Speaking to the toast of kindred clubs, Mr Taylor stated that all clubs should combine and make the Southland Racing Club a metropolitan body and take charge of racing throughout Southland. It has been stated that Parliament should control racing, but it will be a sorry day for racing should this happen. The clubs have kept it a clean sport, and if Parliament assumes control racing will be suppressed. The various clubs should be left to carry on the sport as in the past. Mr E. Russell considered that racing was more progressive in New Zealand