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ADVANCE SOUTHLAND.

IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE SOUTHLAND LEAGUE.

An important and representative meeting of the Southland League was held on Tuesday last, when a number of important matters were discussed which would make for the advancement of Southland. The meeting was presided over by Mr A. W. Rodger. Several important matters were discussed which would be further analysed at a future meeting of the League.

A DEPUTATION.

On behalf of the Labour Carnival Committee, Mr D. Scott waited as a deputation to ask the League's assistance in stimulating interest in the proposed industrial exhibition associated with the Labour Carnival. The object of the carnival was to raise funds for the erection of a Labour Hall in Invercargill. It would be a good advertisement for Southland to display goods as suggested, and benefit Southland's industries. At the same time the attitude of the business men, if they acceded to his request, would bring about a better understanding between capital and labour.

Australia is forging ahead and exploiting every avenue of manufacture, and boasting its industries. The Southland League should help the Labour people to boost Southland and assist them to erect a Labour Hall. If a committee of business men could be got together to work with Labour representatives, it would not only make for a better understanding, but have a splendid advertising and educative effect. It is proposed to endeavour to get an exhibit of locally made goods in all the shop windows during the carnival week. A great deal of support had been promised by some business men. However, it was possible to run a carnival without the assistance of the business community. At the conclusion of Mr Scott's remarks there was appreciative applause.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had explained to Mr Scott that the meeting was of a preliminary character and that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the League.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY.

In opening the meeting, the chairman dealt with the work ahead of the League. Some time had elapsed since a meeting of the League had been held, but that has been justified owing to the vast amount of work entailed in the initial stages of the hydro-electric scheme, which had taken up considerable time, and brought to a successful issue as far as the League could assist. The Electric Power Board was now constituted and it was for the League to take up other duties. The Board has enjoyed the assistance of the League's staff and officers, but that could not go on much longer as the Board would be utilizing its new premises. The constitution of the League needed revising as it was found by experience, that it was impossible to maintain interest with the various branches distributed throughout Southland. The underlying principle of the League's constitution was a good one. It had been found necessary to carry the League on by sustaining members. Anyone prepared to pay a guinea had the privileges of a councillor. These payments had not been renewed, and the League had recently been carried on without visible means of support. Mr Rodger spoke of the value of union between public bodies in any request to the authorities—it was this that had impressed the Government in connection with the electrification scheme. So he suggested that the League should be representative of the public bodies. The representatives would meet round the table the live spirits of the community. If the bodies had representation to a greater extent than hitherto on the League's council it would probably mean that the League would receive great benefit. Representation would also be to the benefit of the public bodies and to Southland as a whole. In connection with grants, he mentioned that the Canterbury Progress League had an income of £1289 10s from public bodies, in South Canterbury it was £232 6s and in Otago £172 10s. The thing to be done was to decide whether or not the League should go on—that would be answered only in the affirmative, he thought, and they should set up a committee to make suggestions regarding carrying on the League.

Some discussion arose regarding the personnel of the committee, Mr Hinchey stating that he did not think the chairmen of public bodies should be asked to become

members. He said that he did not think it altogether wise to endeavour to drive public bodies. There was a feeling in certain quarters that the League existed for the purpose of doing this. He did not know that an invitation to public bodies to send representatives on the committee would be taken in the spirit in which it was given.

The Chairman stated that he considered that the invitation would be taken in a different way. Even if they did not wish to come in they could not say they had not been asked. The opportunity was being given public bodies of being represented on the League in a way they had never been represented before.

Mr Hinchey, in reply, said that the League was really a suggestion organisation. It had no executive power, and it would not be fair to include representatives of public bodies because it would place them in an awkward position. They should not be asked to deal with matters that they had to look at from a business point of view.

It was decided ultimately to include chairmen of public bodies in the committee which was appointed as follows—Messrs Hinchey, Fowler, C. S. Longuet, W. R. Riddell, G. R. George, and the chairman (with power to add to their number).

NAVIGATION OF THE WAIAU.

Mr Hinchey reported on the progress of the scheme to make the Waiau navigable. He said that Mr Hay, the Power Board's consulting engineer, and Captain Allen had succeeded in getting up the Waiau in a launch and in his report to the board the engineer had stated that the river was navigable. Since then he (Mr Hinchey) had been selected by the Board to make investigations at Wanganui, and he was now satisfied that the Waiau could be navigated. The Waiau had the advantage over the Wanganui from the viewpoint of the tourist, because it had two fine lakes at its head. Lake Manapouri was beautiful, and Lake Te Anau was a great attraction. If the Milford Sound track could be diverted to Te Anau this would be an additional attraction. He had no practicable suggestions to make regarding making the river an attraction, but if there was any man in Southland with the capital he would help the province a great deal by floating a company to make the river available by putting one or two boats on it. He was sure that the Government would assist. Mr Hinchey spoke of the advantages that would accrue if a large tourist traffic was streaming through Southland.

ADVERTISING SOUTHLAND.

Mr Rodger dealt with the question of advertising Southland, speaking of the desirability of raising a fund for the purpose. He reminded them that he would soon be proceeding Home on Power Board business, when there he would be quite prepared to make all possible inquiries about agencies that would advertise the province so that people would be attracted here. The League could keep in constant touch with these agencies.

The meeting authorised Mr Rodger to take the steps he suggested.

CEMENT WORKS.

Dealing with the question of establishing cement works in Southland, Mr Rodger said that the League had already taken steps. It would have gone further only it was waiting for a report prepared by Professor Park at the instigation of the Government treating of the possibilities of manufacturing cement in Southland. Mr Rodger understood that the report, which was in the Government's hands, was favourable to the proposal.

Mr Hinchey said that the establishment of large works in Southland should not be aimed at, and he did not think that a private syndicate could run works at a profit. He understood from Professor Park that there were places in Southland where the three essential raw materials were all on the spot. If the works were run by public bodies the cement could be supplied to the consumer, and the bodies, if they got the profits and the requirements at first cost would be in a good position. It had to be remembered that the local bodies would be faced with great difficulty in getting hard timber for constructing bridges and culverts, and cement was the only suitable substitute.

Therefore local bodies should look ahead. Mr Hinchey also referred to the value of cement in the manufacture of lasting roads. The public bodies should be called together to see if they were prepared to provide sufficient money for at least the initial expense attached to the scheme.

Mr A. E. Wilson agreed that it was desirable that the matter should be investigated. He had it on good authority that the present supply was sufficient to meet the Dominion's requirements; he had heard that the Auckland works could swamp the whole of New Zealand. In fact, he believed that an arrangement between the works had been come to some time ago in order to let the smaller works breathe. Mr Wilson remarked that he believed that hard coal was used in the manufacture of cement by the present works. He spoke of the need for carefully considering the financial aspect of any local scheme.

The chairman remarked that near Birchwood, Professor Park had found the necessary ingredients, and he believed that coal, where there were marl and lime, was also to be found at Cliden.

GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT.

The subject of good roads was in the hands of Mr H. Fowler, who said that the extreme north of New Zealand was far ahead of Southland in this matter. There they had a properly constituted body that looked to the roads. Horse traction on the roads was dying. The road now was not a local, but a national affair. He felt that the period had almost been reached when the sole responsibility for maintaining roads would not develop on the local bodies. The cost would probably be borne equally between the local bodies and the Government. He did not think that, as they were told, the system of Government grants for special works was going to end. It was only a phase of evolution, and they were unconsciously drifting into a condition where the national standing of the roads would be recognised. If a company owned the railways and the roads did they think that there would be miles of trucks standing idle in the summer time while there were miles of roads in need of gravel?

BLUFF-STEWART ISLAND SERVICE.

In regard to this rather vexed question the chairman spoke of the petition that had been forwarded to the Government. Mr J. R. Hamilton, M.P., had promised to do his best to have the petition, which had been shelved, brought to light again.

DEMONSTRATION FARMS.

Mr Rodger declared himself anxious that demonstration farms should be established throughout the province. Dr. Reakes, Director of Agriculture, had promised to visit Southland.

SHIPPING REQUIREMENTS.

In regard to the shipping requirements of Bluff, Mr H. F. Drewe said that there was hopes that the old regular service between Bluff and the English ports would be reinstated. This would save roughly between 35s and 45s per ton on the goods which were now going to Dunedin, meaning a saving of about £40,000 per annum to Southland. He thought that the position would be more satisfactory in the near future.

PROVINCIAL STATISTICS.

I. had been suggested, said the chairman, that the statistics bearing on Southland should be published in the Government publications separate from those of Otago.

Mr George: The matter was placed in the hands of Mr Hanan. Has nothing resulted?

The Chairman: Nothing.

SOLDIERS.

The Invercargill Municipal Library are anxious to have a complete file of all publications on transports, or others published by the soldiers. It is fitting and in the interest of all concerned that this file should be obtained, and copies from soldiers will be greatly appreciated. All copies should be accompanied by the sender's full name and address, and will be acknowledged through the columns of "The Digger." We have undertaken to help the librarian in this matter and would appreciate the action of returned men in helping to bring it to a successful issue. Copies can be forwarded to "The Digger," Box 310, Invercargill, or to the Public Library direct.

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