

MOUNTAIN DISTRICT CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

President S.J. TREASURE

Dargo.

Secretary MRS. U. M. ROSSITER

Churchill Ave., Bright.

MEMBERS NEW LETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members,

Time has moved quickly onward since our last Cattlemen's "Get-Together" at Bennie's on the Rose River. Many congratulatory messages have come to hand on the North Eastern Branch's brilliant effort to make the function a resounding success. One of these is the beautifully written article from Maxine Ronnberg as printed in the Newsletter of the Folk Lore Council of Australia. I am delighted to have Maxine's permission to use this very appropriate and descriptive writing in our Newsletter, and with this in mind I include it, with hopes, for a speedy reintroduction of our newsletter.

Perhaps other Branch Members would care to add items of interest and send this on to our Central Secretary, Mrs. U. Rossiter, Churchill Ave., Bright for distribution. This Newsletter should help to fill the gap until we are able again to publish our journal "Voice of the Mountains".

On Sunday, following the function at Bennie's, those who climbed to the Cobbler Plateau had a most enjoyable day. We lunched by the edge of the beautiful Cobbler lake and discussed many aspects, thoughts, life and philosophies, of the mountain cattlemen.

That day was hot and windy. A veil of smoke was drifting across the mountains south of the Divide - an instinctive feeling of disaster prevailed. The Western District was alight; people, homes, stock and property were burning in the teeth of hell. A note of warning: With insufficient protective burning, on a day like this, under DROUGHT CONDITIONS, the mountain bushlands of eastern Victoria could be a death trap for those who enter unsuspecting - it has happened before, and it can happen again when the conditions arise. The debris, fuel upon the forest floor has accumulated to frightening proportions to those who know, and remember what happened in January 1939.

The old cattlemen's hut that I remembered, by the edge of Lake Cobbler, is long gone. "Since by the cruel hands of fate, the bushfires laid it low". So, in conclusion, and for those who were not able to hear the word of the W.J. Wye poem recited by Pam and Rita Treasure at Bennie's - here it is again:-

Our Old Home

The old home now lies desolate, our home of long ago,
Since by the cruel hands of fate, the bushfires laid it low.
The flames swept down the mountain side, before the raging wind,
To devastate our home and pride and ruin leave behind.

The chimneys stand like sentinels, among the blackened brush,
Where sweetly ring like silver bells, the lovesongs of the thrush.
So too they sang when as a child, I heard their tuneful lays,
Those feathered minstrels of the bush, back in my girlhood days.

The spectre chimneys through a haze, recall the homefires bright,
Round which we listened with amaze, to fairy tales by night;
True happiness shone in the eyes of loved ones free from care,
It was an earthly paradise, when we all gathered there.

The march of times brought care and change, when dad and mother died
We children reared beneath the range, soon scattered far and wide;
The past is filled with melodies, though sad to muse upon,
Since all that's left are memories, now the old home has gone.

The silver Dart runs rippling by, to join the Mitta river,
The waters blend in harmony, to live in song forever,
The wild charm of those mountain streams, are valued more than gold,
Their music comes to me in dreams, as in the days of old.

Jack Treasure.

OUR MOUNTAINS - Vice President L. R. McCready

We cattlemen are custodians of approximately 2,000,000 acres of Crown Lands for summer grazing.

Our Association was set up to ensure that this type of grazing continues, the L.C.C. will make recommendations on its future use, State Parliament, will make final decisions. There will invariably be reviews and new pressures, so our Association must be geared to continue its operations as long as grazing continues.

We are fortunate that the L.C.C. is so thorough in its investigations and fair in its recommendations. Final recommendations for the Melbourne area have been made, unfortunately grazing will be phased out on the Baw Baws over the next five years.

East Gippsland recommendations were publicised early in April, this is a most contentious area, but due to our efforts, very little change has been made in the grazing pattern, however we still have work to do there. It is important that 21 year tenure of leases has been recommended.

Final recommendations on 3-4-5 were received on 24th April '77, the Cattlemen received fair treatment.

Our Consultants have done an excellent job on preliminaries, but will need full co-operation from every Cattleman concerned over the next few months to assist with submissions on the above reports.

Those cattlemen who have not joined our Association must be convinced that presenting a united front gives us the best chance of retaining grazing. They must be convinced to join.

Your Executive has controlled expenses of the Association and kept subscriptions to a minimum. Members of the Executive make a generous donation in time, phone calls etc. - your regular attendance at Branch and Central Council Meetings will let them see their efforts are appreciated.

Our approach to the Minister of Lands for cheaper sprays has been successful, and we now have a representative on the Central Council of Vermin and Noxious Weeds Board.

North Eastern Branch this year organised the annual "Get-Together" at Bennie's, those who didn't attend missed a good show. A number of State Parliament members, were present, they are the men who decide our future grazing pattern, and must be kept informed of our problems. It was good to see so many Associate Members present, they are important members. As a result of the "Get-Together" Channel 9 filmed some operations on a bush run, resultant publicity was worthwhile.

The annual weaner sales are with us, prices round 50% of production cost, unfortunately nothing is being done to correct this situation as far as the stock breeder is concerned.

I feel we would take a look at this problem, I think we owe it to our families and the next generation to get some action to restore viability to the stock breeder. Summer grazing pastures are not much use if we can't make a living from the cattle produced.

L. R. McCready.

MANSFIELD TO HOST 1978 CATTLEMEN'S "GET-TOGETHER" - Graeme Stoney

Mansfield Cattlemen are to be the hosts for the 1978 "Get-Together" to be held in February. The Mansfield members realise the importance of this annual function and intend to make every effort to provide a venue and facilities which will ensure a successful and worthwhile two days for all that attend.

They believe it is imperative at this time, to obtain publicity for Mountain Cattlemen, and the February function should be an ideal time to do this. Invitations will be issued shortly to a number of people whom cattlemen would like to see at this "Get-Together", and it is hoped that adequate time can be made available for these visitors to circulate among cattlemen present and get to know them and the problems cattlemen face in the Mountain Cattle industry.

At this crucial time in the history of our industry, it is important that as many cattlemen and their families travel to Mansfield for the 1977 "Get-Together".

Any member who has a suggestion to help plan the function, or would like to suggest people who should be invited, could contact me at the address below:

Graeme Stoney
Minto Park
Box 170
Mansfield
Phone;
(057) 752212

CALL OF THE CATTLEMEN - Maxine Ronnberg

Call of the cattlemen
Heard from afar,
Call of the cattlemen,
Where mountains are.
Calling thier cattle home,
Over the plain,
Calling their cattle home
Calling again.
Saw -----ho!! Saw -----ho!!
Saw -----ho!! Saw -----ho!!

Jack Treasure's song has another practical purpose. It is the battle cry for the Mountain District Cattlemen's Association and we all sang it lustily at their annual reunion and barbeque which was held at Bennie's on the Rose River on a warm February evening. On that day Maryjean Officer and I drove across from the Dargo High Plains and pitched our tents with scores more city and country folk on the grassy river bank. The nobbly peaks of Mt. Type cast shadow on our feasting and revelry. We sat on the ground or on stones or camp stools if we were lucky, and ate mountain cattle steaks and sausages and salad (prepared in a huge shed by a team of stalwart, sweating men as it was not a day for outdoor fires).

The Pipe Band played and the beer flowed and old friends yarned into the darkness. There were stories and ballads of the early days in the district; there was impromptu singing and dancing to the pipes and the concertina band; and over all the feeling of a warm friendliness. I don't think anyone slept very much that night, for the sounds of celebration eddied round the tents from midnight until dawn - new waves of men's voices in chorus, the cracking of stock whips, the weird howl of the dingo (human dingoes methinks), but no sleep and a few grasshoppers in the tent were a small price to pay for the fun of sharing a fiesta with the Mountain District Cattlemen's Association.

Maxine Ronnberg.

ANNUAL MEETING

An invitation is extended to members to attend Annual Meeting of the Association which will be held on Wednesday July 6th comencing at 10a.m. The venue will be the Board Room of the Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board, 4th Floor, Dalgety House, 461 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

To enable the Central Secretary to draw up the Enda for this Meeting, Branch Secretaries are asked to have all items to be brought forward for discussion to her by the 20th June.

Mrs. U. Rossiter, Churchill Ave., Bright