

of discussion and reasoning. Debates and discussions have come more to the fore, and local farmers and others have willingly filled in the gaps caused by the inability to obtain other lecturers.

The clubs generally have assisted to their utmost in the interests of primary production, and so far as organising and assisting in patriotic efforts and appeals is concerned, they have certainly pulled their weight. In every At the same time, both of these activities have been carried out in the clubs, and in many cases as inter-club and district competitions. Their value has been definitely proved in the past, and every effort has been made to continue them as far as possible. Various districts have also staged their own particular competitions, such as stack-district throughout the Dominion the clubs have been very much to the fore in patriotic work, and in many cases have contributed, not once, but many times through the medium of social and other functions staged for the purpose. Surplus funds have also, in a number of cases, been devoted to patriotic efforts.

Experimental Scheme

An interesting and important development of club work during the latter part of the year has been the inauguration of the Y.F.C. Experimental Scheme. This scheme, embodying the assistance of and co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, embraces the laying down of trial plots with linen flax, wheat, grass strains, fertilisers, root-crops, etc., and has been successfully launched with the aid of the District Committees, the various projects being taken up by clubs all over the Dominion. It is hoped by means of this scheme not only to interest the younger members, but also to enable them to realise that through their clubs and with very little effort they can accomplish something of value to themselves on their own farms and something additionally that is of national importance.

The fact that District Committees are, in many respects, the most important link in the chain of the Y.F.C. organisation has been further borne out by the past year's experience. Live District Committees which held regular meetings have been able to hold the clubs in their particular districts to a far greater extent than committees which met at irregular intervals, often waiting until there was a sufficient accumulation of business, in their opinion, to warrant holding a meeting. It is noticeable that in areas where the District Committees have been kept the weaker clubs have been encouraged, and that, even in the face of the many difficulties prevailing, inter-club and district activities have been promoted, and although perhaps carried out on a modified scale, have created interest and generally reacted

to the benefit of the clubs concerned. In the light of the year's experience, it is a fact that this example could well be copied by all units of the Federation, including even the councils and the Dominion Executive Committee. If enthusiasm is allowed to die down, it is patent that the whole movement will suffer.

Duty to Members Overseas

So far, it has not been possible to compile a complete Roll of Honour of members serving overseas, but it is estimated that more than 2,000 members have left the Dominion to "do their bit" with the fighting forces. The task of those who remain behind to look after the "home front" is certainly difficult, and carries many responsibilities. Not the least of these is their duty to their comrades who are serving overseas, and this entails, among other things, making every effort to retain the Y.F.C. organisation intact, so that they can welcome their comrades, when they return, as an organisation, and use that organisation to assist them back to their normal lives when the struggle for freedom is over.

The formation and successful carrying on of the Young Farmers' Club in Egypt has given an indication of the keenness of its members, and their desire that the movement should still thrive, even under adverse conditions, and it becomes the duty of those who are still in New Zealand, and particularly those under military age, to see that the organisation is carried on.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty to be overcome is the fact that, because of present conditions, the general age-average of all clubs has been lowered, and that by far the greater number of the "leaders" in the clubs are away. This must seriously affect—and has already done so in many cases—the type and standard of work and activities and the smooth running of the clubs. On this account, it is apparent that many clubs will need to be "nursed" until such time as new leaders are evolved from the present younger generation. The older farmers and others, acting in the capacity of advisory members, are already doing much to help along these lines, and the duties of District Committees in this connection must be fully appreciated and carried out if the fabric and structure of the organisation are to be preserved. So far as councils are concerned, they are in a position to give a lead to the District Committees by giving assistance to such activities as may be considered conducive to the creation of greater interest in the work of the movement generally, and it is felt that no effort, within reason, should be spared to ensure that encouragement is given to districts and clubs that are in need of it.

Reviewing the position of the Y.F.C. movement at the present time, and taking into consideration the many difficulties that have had to be faced, it is, after all, a matter for self-congratulation to those of us who are deeply interested in the welfare of the movement that the organisation has passed through such a critical period and emerged, shorn of some of its units certainly, but still intact. One cannot but experience a certain amount of disappointment that a number of the clubs have been forced, at least temporarily, to abandon their activities, but this disappointment is tempered by the realisation that not only has the organisation demonstrated what can be done in normal times, but that it has also faced up to, and is carrying on in spite of, extreme difficulties during war-time. The appreciation that there is a "job of work" to be done when these troublous times are over should spur each and every one of us to make our best effort to ensure that the movement is directed along the most useful lines so as to preserve it for its greater task in normal times.

Appreciation

I wish to thank, on behalf of the Federation, the previous Minister of Agriculture (Hon. W. Lee Martin) for his continued interest in the Y.F.C. movement, and also his successor, Hon. J. G. Barclay, for his assistance. I also wish to thank the officers of the Department of Agriculture who have been of such material assistance in the active carrying on of the organisation. I also wish to acknowledge the help given to the clubs and other units of the organisation by the A. and P. societies, breed societies, agricultural colleges, research institutes, the N.Z. Farmers' Union, and Women's Division, and to thank all others, both within and outside of the organisation, who by their interest and assistance have contributed in so many ways to the well-being of the movement. I would also give special thanks to the many senior and advisory members who have done so much to assist in establishing the Young Farmers' Clubs and to keep them running in the face of the grave difficulties experienced during the past year. At the same time I would appeal to them to give, if possible, even more assistance, as it is required today more than ever before. With the appreciation of the value of the material aid which they have so willingly contributed in the past, we can look to their help in the future with confidence.

In conclusion, I would point out that we should take courage from the example set us by the Young Farmers' Clubs organisations of Great Britain, which have adapted themselves to conditions in the face of far greater difficulties than we can ever conceive, and are still carrying on and utilising their