

SPECIALIST CLUB ACTIVITIES

SECRETARY OF THE I.S.R.R.A. REPLIES TO ITS CRITICS

AS CERTAIN aspects of the International Standard Rex Rabbit Association's policy seem to be coming in for more than their fair share of criticism, and as my name is being coupled with that policy in a derogatory manner, I think I should explain the reasons for some recent decisions. Whoever had been secretary or treasurer would have had to effect some changes this year, and that for one reason, and one reason only—finance.

The red light first showed over a year ago, when I was still sweating in India. That was when the committee decided to charge admission at the adult stock show, and to issue books of admission tickets to members prior to the show. Until then I believe, no admission fees had ever been charged at our shows. The reason for this first change of policy was due to the rapid depletion of the Association's funds, caused by the steeply rising costs of running the Association. This was reflected in the balance sheet at the end of last year, which showed that a credit balance of £138 brought forward, had been converted into a deficit of £11. as at Sept. 30th, 1946.

That was the position when I took over as treasurer in Dec. last. At the A.G.M., the "Rex" Review editor reported a loss of £12, and the year-book editor reported another loss of £8 15s., so that there was a total deficit of over £22 which had to be liquidated before any funds were available for the current year. Admission fees to the A.S.S. showed a profit of £52, but this was largely eaten up by the above deficit, and by a further loss of £20 on the dinner.

Until last year we had shown handsome profits on all shows, but again owing to rising costs, this source of revenue has disappeared. Entries at the A.S.S. last Dec. were only slightly down on previous years, but the total profit was only £2 10s. This, as treasurer, I started from scratch with the knowledge that the Association's budget had to be balanced from one source of revenue only—members' subs.—and it has been the dickens of a job to keep on the right side. At the present time our bank balance is less than £10. If six or seven lucky members win tankards, that £10 will go up the spout.

Such is the position: no one can be blamed. As I have remarked earlier, the red light was seen over a year ago. We had hoped to get through this year without any curtailment of our activities, and without having to propose any money raising stunts, but circumstances have been too much for us. First came the Fellowship scheme, which, admittedly, has had a somewhat frigid reception (although I think most of the published criticism has been somewhat biased and illogical, but I hope to reply to that on another occasion).

The limitation of blue ribbons to 500 per annum, or approximately 10 per week, has caused a storm amongst show secretaries, who have been applying to Mr. Rawlin for ribbons, only to be told that the quota for that week has been exhausted. They have followed this up in great indignation by writing to me, and I have had to reply, expressing my genuine regret, that I can do nothing and explaining that it has been necessary to restrict the issue to 500 per annum.

I have been cudgelling my brains till my head reels, trying to think of ways and means to satisfy everybody, or at least, of carrying on the Association with as few changes as possible, and to give members the same generous service as they have always had. I should like to see those services extended. The latest scheme thought up by Mr. Rawlin, and announced by him last week, should go far towards satisfying show secretaries that we are trying to give them all a square deal, and at the same time should help the finances of the Association. Blue ribbons cost 8d. each, or have done up to the present time, and if they were issued ad lib. we should be issuing 30, 40, or even 50 some weeks from now to the end of the year, so I don't think its asking too much of societies to contribute a nominal sum towards the cost of the ribbons.

There is just one other point of criticism, which, again from what I hear, has been somewhat unfairly charged against me, and that is, the committee ruling that no special be awarded to shows being held on the same dates as our own adult and young stock shows. I looked up the minutes and found that this ruling was first laid down by a committee in 1943, since when it has stood, and has, apparently, not previously been questioned. Unfortunately this year, two well-known societies, both of which are held in high esteem for putting on grand shows, have chosen for their young stock shows, the same date as our own—July 26th. Both societies appealed to the committee, which, although 80 per cent different in personnel, from the original committee making the ruling, confirmed the earlier decision. I know this has caused a certain amount of ill-will which no-one regrets more than I do, especially as with one of these societies I had one of the happiest days judging I can remember last year. Fortunately this contretemps should not occur in future, for if a society is affiliated, I think it should be entitled to its ribbons on every occasion it puts on an appropriate schedule, irrespective of the dates. That is only a personal opinion, of course, which will need confirmation by the committee.

Now, having placed the facts squarely before members, may I appeal for their loyal support and active enthusiasm? I should be only too happy to drop all the recent proposals—Fellowship scheme (although I still think its a sound principle), quota restriction and affiliation, for they all mean extra work for the officials of the Association, and

give out our awards freely. That's the way to keep everybody happy, but it needs a clever man than I am to do it on a £10 balance. Subs. are still coming along fairly regularly, in fact we are slightly up I think on this time last year, with just over 800 paid members at the moment. There are many enthusiastic members who are constantly sending me new recruits. 100 members this year would make all the difference, so just see what you can do, will you? I shall also of course be very glad to hear from any old members who have overlooked their subs.

Finally, if members have any grouse about how the club is being administered, they should drop me a line. I shall always do my best to keep everybody happy, and if ever I can give assistance to anyone, it's always there for the asking.—Lloyd Denman, 4, Shalston Villas, Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

NATIONAL ENGLISH CLUB

THE Nat. English young stock show was exceedingly well staged and managed. Mr. Wilson very ably carried out his duties as show secretary, and Mr. Trickett and Mr. Gascoign headed a good team of workers in Messrs. J. Sodey, A. W. Green, J. Green, Sharp, Maynes, Wheatcroft, Hammond, Benson and Miss L. Herries Crosbie, of chocolate fame, who worked like a Trojan during the whole of the show. Mrs. Wheatcroft was in charge of refreshments.

I thank all exhibitors for the manner in which they supported the show, and so ensured its success. The total entry was 1106—not perhaps a record, but a good entry, and one of which we can be proud. Unfortunately I was unable to get to the show until the Saturday afternoon, and owing to this late arrival I had little time to inspect the stock as my time was taken up with renewing the acquaintance of many of our members. It's worth travelling from one end of the country to the other just to enjoy that warm handshake and the friendly greeting.

The main London contingent were just entering the train I left at Newark on their way home. Hampson, proud of his win, and very rightly so, Hammond (not the cricketer but the tortoise trainer) just bubbling over with good spirits and full of the joy of a good show. The rest of the lads were full of good cheer (nearly made a mistake there).

Scotland was also well represented in Messrs. Johnson, McInnes and Stewart, who were going back home on the Sunday. Congratulations to Messrs. Johnson and Stewart for having won the blue cup. The winner was a grand exhibit and was put down as fit as a fiddle.

The gold cup, black cup, American cup and ribbon and the B.R.C. cup was won by Mr. A. Treloar, who is at present serving in H.M. Navy. His grandfather had sent the rabbit to the show, so we can all understand what this lad felt like when he got the great news.

The chocolate cup went to Mr. Selvey, Portishead, near Bristol, and he is to be congratulated on the strids he has made in this colour since he took it up a comparatively short time ago. Unfortunately the owner of the best tortoise exhibit had not

been a member of the club long enough to comply with the rule about the award of trophies, and so this year's winner of the Tortoise cup is Mr. M. Jackson, Macclesfield. During recent weeks I have been able to call upon several of our members in various parts of the country. Mr. Hill, Sowerby Bridge, specialises in blacks, and keeps a very nice stud. I also called upon Mr. Rampton, Southampton, and inspected his orchard layout. Here again blacks and blues hold pride of place, and it is not difficult to pick out likely stock. Mr. A. C. Lister, Taunton, the son of our president also has a small stud of English kept in ideal conditions. It is nice to be able to drop in on fellow fanciers when one is in a strange town and be sure of a welcome, for we have all a common subject on which to talk.

Mr. Kinson asks me to correct a wrong impression that he has lost the whole of his tortoise stud. This is not correct, but he did lose the bulk of them, including all his exhibition stock. This loss was due to feeding grass which had been treated with weed killer. It should be noted therefore that before taking any grass clippings one should make sure that the grass has not been treated with anything which is likely to harm stock. Such is the good fellowship of the Fancy that Mr. Kinson has had eight does given and has had to refuse more. Help at a time like that through which Mr. Kinson must have passed is greatly to be appreciated, and I do know that Ted is very deeply thankful and impressed by the way his fellow members of the N.E.R.C. have rallied round and given him a helping hand.

The young stock show catalogues and award list may be had from me, price 1/- post paid. The first batch of club badges has been sold.—Arnold Sanderson, Hon. Sec., 24, Wyther Park Road, Armley, Leeds 12.

NATIONAL SABLE CLUB

OWING to pressure of business I very much regret to say that I was unable to be present at the National Young Stock Show at Smethwick. It was the first I have missed for eight years.

After reading the article written under the non-de-plume of "Sable Breeder" in last week's issue I regret my absence more than ever. For had I been there I should have, perhaps, learned who at least one of these one-track minded critics of the National was.

For some reason best known to themselves (can it be after reading their own articles?)—the majority of these one-colour or shade men never dare sign their articles with their own name. To write of a "Blue Sable" is childish.

One would gather from the writings of these mysterious Sable breeders that the National caters for everything but a medium. I would remind "Sable Breeder" that the medium is catered for by my club and would respectfully suggest to him that National members have bred as many winners in this shade as have the one-shade brigade.

Now that I have unfortunately had to dispose of practically all my stud I can write of my own achievements without being accused of free advertising—a thing I have religiously avoided while I have been club secretary.

During the past five years I have produced Quadruple Ch., Caradoc, Triple Ch., Cham, pague, and Champions Commodore, Charming and Commander—everyone a medium. I challenge any of these medium specialists to approach that record. This is surely sufficient proof that the three shades are necessary, as I breed and exhibit all three.

I, personally, am fed up of reading these

anonymous articles which are doing the breed more harm than good. If you have anything constructive to say on this controversial subject, then come from behind that fence and say it openly. Be British in every sense of the word.—John Morgan.

NATIONAL CHIN-REX CLUB.

I APOLOGISE for the non appearance of Chin-rex Club notes recently. My business takes up so much of my time that at present it's a case of "Work or Want."

The adult stock show will be held on Sunday, Jan. 25th, at the Conservative Hall, Windsor. The day and date may be criticised but we had to avoid clashing. The Windsor venue is, I understand, excellent and refreshments will be available. The Ermine conjunction with ours. The Chin-rex Club holds the record for entries at a colour club show with 572.

September 6th, the date of the young stock show was fixed at Leicester last July and was advertised. Even so several eRx clubs have "poached" the same date. As the Chin-rex, Ermine, Sable, Seal, Lynx and maybe Orange-rex clubs are holding a joint show it can be taken for granted that the cream of these breeds will be at the club show for there is no better win than a club win against the pick of the breed.

I appeal to members to make a bumper entry of Chin-rex. Even if they haven't anything ready an entry will help the show to be a success.

The last Y.S.S. showed a loss of £13, but the A.S.S. showed a gain of £12 19s. 11d. This profit was due mainly to the generosity of members. The club's financial position is sound but no club can continue to be successful without the enthusiasm of its members and officials. The club's object is to make the Chin-rex the most popular of all Rex and any Chin-rex breeder in the country is invited to join "This Happy Breed."

Applications for rosettes are pouring from show secretaries, but the quota for August has been passed and no more can be allotted till September. Early application for September is desired.

I appeal to judges to refrain from awarding rosettes to poor exhibits. Only a rabbit worthy of the honour should receive it. Only one special form has so far been returned to me with the words "Exhibit unworthy." I thank that judge for helping the breed and I will not fail to grant club support for shows at which he is officiating.

Certificates and rosettes will be awarded only to exhibitors who have been members of the club for at least 14 days before the show at which they are won.

At a recent show a non-member won the rosette and he considered it unfair when I would not award it to him. I explained that the cost of a rosette was almost equal to one year's subscription. If specialist clubs awarded their specials to non-members there would be no point in joining the clubs. Specials and rosettes are awarded to attract new members.

Only by supporting shows at which club specials are offered can members make their rabbits champions. Give certificates under three different club judges must be won before an exhibitor can claim a championship.

Will show secretaries who want a list of club members please write to me for a year book enclosing return postage? I appeal to all breeders of Chin-rex who are not members of the club to join without delay. The annual subscription, which includes a year book and badge, is 5/—Walter Allen, 29, High Street, Northwood, Middlesex.

PROPOSED WESTERN SECTION OF BEVEREN CLUB

BEVEREN CLUB

AN open table show has been fixed for Aug. 9th at Taunton. At 3 p.m. (or after the judging) there will be a meeting to consider the formation of a Western Section of the Beveren Club.

Nominations for officials (including secretary) should be sent to me by those who cannot attend. All officials will be elected by postal ballot. Nominations will be taken beforehand or at the meeting. Any further suggestions will be welcome.

The prize money at the table show is guaranteed. Stock will be handled by experienced stewards and dispatched by rail as soon as judging is finished.—Kathleen A. Dibsdall, Primrose Cottage, Marnhull, Sturminster, Newton, Dorset.

GREATER LONDON DUTCH CLUB

THE Young Stock Show of the Greater London Dutch Club was held at Grotto Passage and it was nice to welcome those old friends of the club, Dick O'Hara, Tommy Whittaker and Tommy Harrison at the judging tables. We could have given them more to do, but we all spent a most enjoyable day at headquarters.

Jim Gregory won Best in Show with his Black, which went on to win again at Doncaster and only narrowly missed Best in Show there.

I am making a special request to members to attend and enter at these shows if at all possible, they are put on for their special benefit, and their co-operation and support will make them successful. Prize money is guaranteed by the club, and stock will be well looked after.

The club continues its policy of granting specials to its members and it is gratifying that many are claimed every week. This year's totals exceed any of previous years.

The entries at monthly shows have been falling off lately. These shows are staged so that members can try out youngsters, and so that ideas and suggestions can be heard at the meetings held afterwards. Next month, on Aug. 3rd, the Club Team Challenge (for Southern England), which we want to stage at the adult stock show on Sunday, Oct. 5th, will be discussed. Nominations for the team will be called for one of each colour. Three panel judges are booked for Oct. 5th, Jim Swetnam, W. Danecourt and Tommy Moss, with Bill Atack as reserve.—Arthur Ashton, Asst. Sec.

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB NOTES AND NEWS

ONCE-A-WEEK FEEDING

Coming Events

July 26th—Stroud.
Aug. 9th—Eccles.
Aug. 22nd—Blackpool.

I HAVE received a letter from a beginner in mouse breeding, who says: "I took up mice about two years ago. I bought a good trio, but the does had one litter only. The youngsters never bred at all. I wondered if they had been in-bred too much, so I bought a good buck of another strain. They did not breed a single youngster. Later I bought a trio of another variety, with the same result. This year I thought I would try again, and I bought a trio of Cham and Tans. They were mated on May 14th, and up to the present there is no sign of the does being in kindle."

"All the stock were bought from well-known fanciers. I paid what they asked, and they treated me well. I have no complaint about the stock or those who supplied them. The mice have always been kept in roomy cages and have been kept clean, and have been well looked after in every way."

I keep them in my rabbitry, and usually keep the cage in an empty rabbit hutch. There is always fresh air and a good light. They have the best hay I can buy, and look in fine condition. The only trouble is that they will not breed."

Most fanciers will have had this trouble from time to time but it is certainly more widespread this year. Can it be an aftermath of the bad weather we had earlier in the year?

When you have a fairly big stock there are various ways out of the difficulty. On some occasions it is only necessary to transfer the does to another buck. Another idea is to take the does out of the cage for a day or two and replace it. Some fanciers are firm believers in feeding liberally with greenstuff, chickweed for preference, and I must admit that it does sometimes do the trick. The mice certainly enjoy it.

Recently I had the same trouble with a trio of self chocolates, the only ones I had. They were together for weeks and showed no signs of breeding. In desperation I put the two does to a waster buck about eleven weeks old. He was of no use for show purposes, but a big strong, strapping buck full of life and vigour. The does were showing

in kindle in just over a fortnight. As soon as the young were born I destroyed them and immediately mated the does back to the chocolate buck. This did the trick, and the does are now bringing up two nice litters.

The mention of greenstuff for feeding brings me to an interesting letter from Mr. Pitt-Francis, who is a strong believer in its use.

Mr. Francis writes: "Everyone should have a holiday, even a 'mouser,' but the ways and means present a problem very often. We do not like to entrust the feeding of our mice to our next door neighbour, who has little interest in the matter, but is willing to oblige."

I write these notes after a short holiday three counties away from my home. The stock was fed before leaving, and fed again on my arrival home, and there were no accidents—not a single baby fouled by the mother.

"It was done by bringing the stock on to vegetable feeding earlier in the year."

"I am certain now that mothers do not foul their young from lack of water, but from lack of greenfood or other foods containing proteins."

"I never use water. Water must be fresh at all times if it must be provided, but who can keep it clean with tiny feet pattering in it?"

"Dry out the waste bread by leaving it overnight in a cooling oven. If this is done right the bread will not be brown, but will be much the same colour as it went in. If dropped it will break almost like a dropped dish. This will last for a week or more in a cage, and will give the mice a continuous nibbling feast."

"All moisture for the duration of the holiday will be supplied by greenfood. By greens I mean cabbage stem, dandelion, chickweed, sowthistle, salsafy, etc. Train the mice on to greens early in the year. If you are normally using a sop for moisture, give it on alternate days, supplying green instead, and gradually lowering the quantity of sop until the mice are entirely on greenfood. They will not take kindly to sops if there are greens to be had. You will see the improvement in coat and size. I feel sure. Mice are vegetarians by birth, habit and nature, and in these days of food shortages I think we could ease matters a good deal by seeing that a fair proportion of our weeds find their way into the mousetry."