

The  
Australasian Racing Pigeon.

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WITH this issue the "A.R.P." completes the first year of its existence, and considering the troublesome times we are passing through, we are very proud to be able to prove by the publication of the Vol. 1, No. 12, that the "A.R.P." has come to stay, and, moreover, to be, we hope, a lasting benefit to the fancy. Any sport without a mouthpiece, in the shape of a paper devoted to its interests, is greatly handicapped.

We were told twelve months ago that two or three issues at the most would be sufficient to discourage us and settle our editorial ambitions, but in spite of many hard knocks we are still struggling along, and hope to keep it up. We are triers, and a trier is never beaten, for head him in one direction he tries another path.

We wish to thank all contributors, advertisers, club secretaries, and subscribers for the way in which they have backed us up during the year, and we hope they will continue in the same spirit to support the paper while it is amongst us. The paper is here to serve the fancy, if you have a grievance to ventilate do so through our columns. We are yours to command; if we can do anything for the fancy, let us know about it.

All we ask of our readers and pigeon fanciers in general is that they will back us up with their subscriptions, and when they have surplus stock to dispose of with their advertisements. By doing so they are helping the sport, and incidentally helping themselves. Don't hesitate to take your copy of the "A.R.P." to the club with you and show it to all new members; give them the tip to send along a sub.

This month marks the opening of the racing season of 1918, and we would again remind all Federation and Club Secretaries to send in their race results as early as they can. Send each week's results as the race is flown. Don't save them up till the end of the month and perhaps miss the issue with the lot;

that gets the paper, as well as themselves, into hot water; better miss the issue with one result than risk the lot. It is necessary to have our matter in the hands of the printer quite a week before the first of each month. When one man has to be office boy, proof-reader, editor, and general useful, it takes a little time to arrange all details and put them in order.

THEORIES AND QUERIES.

The concluding paragraph of the Western Australian race results appearing in the June issue of the "A.R.P.", in which the 650-mile race was classed as a smash because only six birds homed out of fifteen sent to the race, struck me very forcibly. Why, in the east of the Continent we would be throwing our hats in the air and waiting to paint the town red if we got nearly 50 per cent. of our birds home from a six-hundred mile race. Moreover, the fortunate fanciers of the Western State seem to be able to get their birds home successfully each year from this distance. Why should returns be better and more regular in the West than is the case in the East? Is the character of the country over which the birds have to fly responsible for this, or is the quality of the birds better, or does the fault lie with our training methods?

Do we in Sydney keep too many birds, and trust too much to luck, inasmuch as we send a big team of birds, mostly yearlings, to each race, in the hopes of getting at least one good enough to come away and win for us? Then, again, does not the fact of having so many birds make us treat them carelessly in the matter of training? It is far too expensive to give every bird a proper schooling over the route, so we jump them in the hopes of the mob bringing the unschooled ones along until near home. And, again, does not the man with a small team pay more attention to his few birds, and study them more carefully than does the man with a big team, with the result that he knows the individual characteristics of each racer?

Many fanciers contend that the last lap that the Sydney bird has to face, viz., the hundred miles or so of mountain ranges, proves too much for tired birds, and that many go down on the far side of the ranges rather than face them at the end of a long day's fly, and that once down their chances of ever reaching home are few. What with the farmer, who has visions of his water being spoiled, and rushes off for his gun the moment the poor bird alights, hawks, wild cats, and other vermin, they are fairly up against it. It is a game bird that will tackle mountain ranges infested with birds of prey, when tired and on his own at the end of a long fly.

Then take Queensland, where the birds manage to get home from Longreach to Brisbane each year, a distance of 716 miles. Are the local conditions so different? Is it that the country is more sparsely peopled, and the farmer and his gun not so much in evidence, or is the country more open and flat over which the birds home? But no

matter what the conditions are, the bird that flies 600 or 700 miles is a good one, and when a bird does it twice, and even three times, as some of these champions have done, well, we take off our hats to it.

Maybe the fact of being flown in races in which only a small team of birds compete teaches these birds self-reliance, so that when one of them finds himself up against a tough proposition he bucks in on his own account, whereas a bird used to homing with a big mob continues to stick in the mob, and has flown himself out before he realises that he is lost.

What the reason is I have not been able to fathom, but I am sure there must be some cause for the nasty knocks we get when flying Mildura. Maybe the river attracts the birds, as Mr. Creaton suggests, or perhaps for some reason unexplained Mildura is a bad tossing point, as other towns have been proved to be.

TRIER.

SYDNEY DOINGS.

The Western Federation have issued the following schedule of dates and race points for season 1918:—

First Series.

June 22nd—Wallerawang Federation Race.

June 29th—Wallerawang Federation Race.

July 6th—Wallerawang Club Race.

July 13th—Mudgee Club Race.

July 20th—Wellington Club Race.

Second Series.

July 27th—Wallerawang Club Race.

Aug. 3rd—Mudgee Club Race.

Aug. 10th—Mudgee Sectional Race.

Aug. 17th—Wellington Club Race.

Aug. 24th—Dubbo Club Race.

Aug. 31st—Nevertire Special Ring Race.

Sept. 7th—Nevertire Club Race.

Sept. 14th—Coonamble Club Race.

Sept. 21st—Coonamble Sectional Race.

Sept. 28th—Bourke Special and Club Race.

Oct. 12th—Charleville Special and Club Race.

Everything points to a successful season. A couple of training tosses have been flown from Springwood, and judging by the enthusiasm of the members of the various clubs, things should boom on the Western route. The secretary informs me that for the ring race from Nevertire there will be over £100 cut up.

LEICHHARDT SHOW.

The Leichhardt Flying Club held a very successful Show on Saturdays, May 4th, 11th, 18th. The birds being penned on evening previous to each show. So that by the time they were judged on Saturday morning the birds had quietened down and looked their best. The committee are to be congratulated, as they did everything possible to make the Show a success. They drew lots to stay with the birds overnight each show. The birds were fed and watered twice during the day. The Judge, Mr. J. Ward, is to be congratulated.