

# System May Be Changed

The present system used by the S.A. Homing Pigeon Association to conduct its major events will be changed if a move to that end is successful.

Apart from the brief period of sectional racing which was tried just after the last war, the present form of open competition has been used for more than 40 years.

There is no doubt that the sport is growing at a fast rate from year to year, and the total of almost 400 associated members is twice the number of a few years ago.

This year was a record one in every way. The SAHPA membership, the race entries, the prizemoney, the ring sales and most important of all, the returns from the early races were so good that the records of entries and prizemoney were ensured.

Despite the fact that the returns over the whole year were such that most lofts were left with more birds on the perches than usual, the ring sales to date have passed last year's record of 26,000, and it is now estimated that 31,000 will be sold to meet the demand.

Competition hardens or eases in step with the growth or decline of the sport, and there is no doubt that the more owners and pigeons taking part, the more difficult it is to win.

Those in favor of the change claim that the competition is now so great that the changes of many owners and clubs sharing in the prizemoney of the six middle-distance races (300 to 400 miles) are very remote.

It is suggested that the system be altered to permit these races to be held as club events so that clubs close to each other may form together, if desired, in various groups and so confine the competition to shorter boundaries.

If the idea is adopted it will mean that the big prizemoney in the competition—more than £1,000 was paid out in each derby race this year—will be sacrificed for prizes of lesser value.

There are sound reasons both for and against the change.

Those in favor of the present system claim that there are some owners and clubs, who because of their geographical position, find it hard to group together within a restricted area as small as those in favor of the change.

They also state that the reason they joined the association was to enjoy stronger racing, and if competition weakens, as it must if the alteration is made, their desire for prestige will be denied them.

It is also pointed out that if the result sheets of the races under fire this year are perused properly, it will be found that all owners, no matter where they lived, had their chance to take out a prize if they were good enough.

These are some of the reasons which are being put forward both for and against the change.

Perhaps a solution to the problem can be found which will make the majority happier without any great change at all.

If the matter is examined without bias one way or the other, it must be admitted that those in favor of the change want a little bit back in exchange for what it is costing them, and are prepared to forego their chances of winning big prizemoney in order to achieve this end.

This can be done without weakening the competition and without robbing the sport of any of its prestige.

It is simply a matter of extending the prize list by making more prizes at the expense of the big ones at the top of the list.

The honor and glory of winning the race against the strongest opponents will still be there for those who seek it and the chances of winning

One of the main aims of the association is to promote the growth of the sport, and it is not unlikely that the present system will be changed if it is not found to be successful. It was tried before and it failed.

## Carrieton To Melbourne

The Victorian Racing Pigeon Union held a race from Carrieton to Melbourne, a distance of 516 miles, 1,207 yards to the winning loft, on November 20. SA readers will find it interesting to note that the heat was similar to the day our birds raced the second Cook event.

It was 96 deg. in Melbourne, 101 deg. at Mildura and in the mid-thirties throughout the whole line of flight.

About 1,500 birds took part in the race with the ultimate winner clocked at 10 hr. 5 min. 3 sec. flying time to record 1,502 yards a minute.

Twelve prizes were paid and the last bird in the money was timed 1 hr. 43 min. 36 sec. after the winner.

VRPU secretary, Mr. H. Parkinson, said the race was "quite a good one," but the follow-on was poor because of 35 to 40 m.p.h. headwinds on the second, third and fourth days.

Here is the comparison between the VRPU race from Carrieton and the SAHPA event held from Cook in similar conditions of heat.

The total of 1,413 birds flew the Cook race and 30 prizes were paid. The winner for A. J. Harris flew 558 miles 963 yards in 14 hr. 52 min. 56 sec. to record 1,100 yards a minute, and 45 min. 46 sec. later the last bird in the prize list was clocked to record 1,049 yards a minute.

While number 12 (the last prizewinner) on the VRPU prize list recorded 1,281 yards a minute—221 y.p.m. less than the winner—the corresponding prizewinner in the SAHPA Cook race was only 14 y.p.m. behind.

Only 51 yards a minute separated first and 30th birds in the Cook event.

The VRPU birds arrived in Adelaide on "The Overland," and were later transported to Carrieton by road.

Here are the 12 prizewinners: B. McElhinney 1,502, D. Gill 1,498, W. Johannesen 1,491, R. Falkingham 1,449, M. Jensen 1,447, B. Lee 1,446, E. Smith 1,444, R. Blizzard 1,429, V. Boag and Son 1,427, K. Searle 1,336, J. Harris 1,281.8, R. Koschel 1,281.7.

## Kalgoorlie Scoreboard

The return from Kalgoorlie still remains at five of 173.

The five birds homed during the period of the 29th to 37th

## Pigeon Notes By Vin Blanden

After release, and with no more arrivals since October 24, it can now be taken for granted that apart from one or two which may return at some future date, the total is complete. In a recent letter from the US, the editors of "The American Racing Pigeon News" have this to say:—

"We were interested in the notes you penned on the failure of your 1,000 mile race.

"There are a number of our fanciers who seem to negotiate this distance successfully with regularity.

"These are located in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Toledo, Ohio. Their lines of flight are from the south-west, we believe."