



CHAIRMAN'S DEPARTURE

The letter which we published last month about Dr. R. A. Webb resigning from the Chairmanship of the National Amateur Winemakers will undoubtedly have been read with the greatest regret by Wine Circles and individual wine-makers up and down the country. Dr. Webb was one of the original members of the National Committee and worked hard and long in many capacities at National level before eventually becoming Chairman. No one has ever doubted his complete devotion to the hobby, his utter sincerity and straight dealing.

It is all the more distressing that such a man should feel that matters have reached such a pitch within the National Executive that he has no course open to him but to resign. He did so in a very restrained and carefully worded letter the nub of which was that he disagreed with the way in which the Executive had filled vacancies in its ranks.

Without wishing to enter into the intricacies of this question we would only make two points: the first is that we clearly recollect that, when the constitution was drawn up some years ago, the intention certainly was that the committee should be elected by the annual general meeting, and that vacancies should be filled by the annual general meeting, but that the Committee should have the power to co-opt additional members if required.

The second is that we think it important that, in the words of the well known dictum, "Justice should not only be done; it must be *seen* to be done".

We would have thought that the National Committee might therefore have been a little uneasy at not having the elections in public at the annual general meeting—and subsequently co-opting members of their own choice.

It is to be hoped that this matter can be settled amicably and to everyone's satisfaction.

NEW OFFICERS

As we go to press the names of the new Committee members have not been announced but there have been other changes on the National Committee. Mr. B. C. A. Turner remains as President for a further term but Mr. K. Hill has become Chairman, Mr. F. Forster is Vice Chairman and Treasurer, and Mr. P. J. Delmon has taken over as General Secretary from Mrs. K. Hill. Other appointments on the executive are Mr. P. Awbery—Entries Secretary; Mr. F. Bastin—Convenor of Judges; Mr. B. Edwards—Journal and Handbook; Mr. E. Plant—Awards Secretary; Mr. H. Ritchie—Supplies Officer; Mr. L. Stagg—Show Supervisor; Mrs. F. Stagg—Chief Steward and Miss S. Varley—Membership Secretary.

Mr. D. Rouston has been co-opted as local liaison officer for the conference at Harrogate next year. Incidentally, we hear whispers that the National Committee is thinking in terms of a holiday camp conference in 1974 and the likelihood is that the venue will be somewhere in the South West.

from our Welsh friends that their Federation was not recognised.

Speaking for the Wales and West, (and half the clubs in the area are members of it, the remainder are not members of the National either), let me now outline some of the "Sporadic and Spasmodic" activities of a typical Federation i.e. the Wales and West.

1. Circulating up-to-date addresses of Circle Secretaries in its area.
2. Publishing a monthly newsletter.
3. Supplying to and advising Clubs on speakers.
4. Assisting local Adult Education Authorities in finding lecturers on winemaking.
5. Advising clubs on the organising of wine competitions and supplying National Wine Judges.
6. Running judging classes.
7. Organising events such as camping weekends, wine seminars, and Continental wine tours.
8. Publicising club events.
9. And finally running an annual wine competition and festival.

My view is that the Regionals are in a position to do far more for Circles and individuals than the National can. The National has an important and responsible role in setting standards, educating winemakers in winemaking practice, representing the interests of winemakers nationally, and finally in organising the irreplaceable annual get together.

I am strongly in favour of the three-tier organisation of Circle/Regional/National. Only when the National is propped up by the Regions, and makes use of the largely untapped supply of organising ability in the Regions will it free itself of the parochial attitudes which exist.

I am not in favour of breakaway organisations. If we are not satisfied with the way the National is run, we must do something about it at the A.G.M. In the past delegates have come up with some good ideas but have not been sufficiently well organised and in any case have been outvoted by the individual members.

No good is to be gained by shouting. The Regional Federation has got to get together and come up with some solid proposals.

Judges

Says Mr. C. V. Tubb, of Bingham, Notts.:

At their last meeting, the Committee of the Amateur Winemakers National Guild of Judges had before them the letter of Mr. E. Plant in your May issue. I have been asked, as their Public Relations Officer, to reply.

In the view of the Committee of A.W.N.G.J. there is room only for the recognised organisation of National Judges, just as there can only be one National Association of Amateur Winemakers. The Guild has not sought any rift or disagreement with any other body and is not aware of any other National organisation of judges that conducts examinations and tries to set a National standard.

I would emphasise that the British Guild of Judges is not a "breakaway" organisation from the Amateur Winemakers National Guild of Judges. On the contrary, the A.W.N.G.J. is as united today as it has ever been.

The Committee sees quite clearly the need for lesser qualified judges, at least until such times as the number of National Judges is increased. In every field there are grades of qualification e.g. University degree, diplomas, certificates of education of all kinds.

So far as regionally qualified judges are concerned, the Guild has probably done more than any other organisation to bring this about. Many members of the Guild spend a lot of time in their Circles and Regions training and testing potential judges. The aim all the time, however, is ultimately to encourage those with the ability and knowledge to sit the examination of the National Guild.

With regard to Mr. Plant's point that the A.W.N.G.J. must decide whether or not they wish to serve a national movement, may I say that since 1963, when 3 or 4 who were not members officiated, members of the Guild have judged all the wines and beers exhibited at the National Conference and Show. When it is borne in mind that no fees or expenses are paid this represents a very considerable contribution to the national winemaking movement by the Amateur Winemakers Guild of Judges.

Region's Role

This letter comes from Mr. G. H. Toule, Treasurer of the Wales & West Wine Festival and Chairman of the Oakfield Wine Society—a member Circle of the N.A.A.W.:

Recent events prompt me to answer some of the points, raised in Mr. Elvin Plant's letter in the May issue.

Firstly, he reveals a sad lack of appreciation of the location and work of the Regionals. A recent camping rally of the Wales and West Wine Festival heard some angry comments