

PEPP-TALK

Oct 25/85
with
Harry
Pepper

During the past weekend the Rossland Legion Branch No. 14 played host to the Zone Fall meeting. Nine Legion branches were in attendance plus a dozen or more people representing VFW branches in the U.S., Deer Park and Airway Heights from Spokane.

The meetings started on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. and continued on until 4:30 p.m. when they broke up to allow the hall to be made ready for the evening banquet and dance. The banquet was catered to by the Rebekah Ladies in the Oddfellows hall and very lively music was provided by the Souveniers. I got the impression that everybody wished that the music would continue longer than it did, but then I guess there's a limit to everyone's endurance and that includes quite a number of those dancing. I know it's a long time since I spent as much time out on a dance floor.

Rossland's Mayor Gordon Jenks welcomed the delegates to our city, extolling the virtues of people who live in our part of the world where the sun shines a lot and the air is clean and fresh. He made mention of the fact that if any delegates found parking tickets on their vehicles they were to take them to Zone Secretary Jim Schuck who would process them, like tearing them up and depositing them in the nearest garbage disposal.

Airway Heights Ed Tomasitis spoke next and invited all the branches present to attend a parade in Spokane on April 26, 1986. He said he would arrange to have the same group of musicians who headed our parade, accompany us down there to head their march. He also mentioned a renewal of the golf tourney between Canadian branches and the American ones. He jokingly added that they would be prepared to give lessons to anyone in need of them.

After he finished talking, Mel Ringhiem of the Grand Forks branch said he fully expected that his branch would gladly put on the tourney at the Christina Lake Course. It will be an 18-hole layout by spring. The tourney will be called the Can-Am.

Despite the fact that John McFarland and Garry Seefeldt spent considerable time setting up a speaker system at the hall, those speaking had to be reminded several times to use it as a number of people at the back of the hall complained and finally the message got across. Then on Sunday morning the initial session was conducted without the aid of a speaker system. It was one of those cases of lack of communication, I didn't intend that to come out that way, but it did anyway. Communications were restored and the rest of the day went along swimmingly.

Back to Saturday, the Kaslo branch told the meeting they would like to send more people but travel and lodging expenses plus what they considered a rather high tariff for people taking in the sessions, prevented more people being present. Several explanations were offered by the host club and others for the charges and it was cleared up to Kaslo's satisfaction.

Bingo in local Legions was given some time in discussions. Jalmer Hall and Doug McIsaac of the Trail club both spoke on the subject. Hall quoting a saying that, "Charity is not benevolence and benevolence is not charity." He added that Bingo is no longer a Legion preserve. McIsaac said that the city fathers in Trail had been asked to intervene when it was rumored that two commercial bingo operators were coming to Trail to start up. The council passed a ruling keeping those kind of people out of town.

Committees were struck with membership going to the Kaslo branch, ways and means to

discussions. Jaimier Hall and Doug McIsaac of the Trail club both spoke on the subject. Hall quoting a saying that, "Charity is not benevolence and benevolence is not charity." He added that Bingo is no longer a Legion preserve. McIsaac said that the city fathers in Trail had been asked to intervene when it was rumored that two commercial bingo operators were coming to Trail to start up. The council passed a ruling keeping those kind of people out of town.

Committees were struck with membership going to the Kaslo branch, ways and means to Nakusp, sports to Trail, veterans affairs to Salmo, and public relations to Zone Secretary Jim Schuck.

Presentations were made to Ed Tomasitis and Jim King the reps of the VFW from our Dominion President for work towards friendship between our two countries. They, in turn presented citations to Zone Commander Earl Moffett of Nakusp.

On Sunday morning the DVA rep, Wilf Solonik spoke to the gathering citing that there are going to be changes in the way the DVA caters to veterans. He said there was also a move being made to prevent vets from having to make the long trip to Vancouver to get certain medical help. He also suggested picking up a book called The Elder Statesman available at all Shoppers Drug Marts in the province.

Doug McIsaac, on sports, spoke at some length on venues of various Dominion and Provincial competitions. Rather than make mistakes on some of these, I would like to suggest contacting Doug at the Trail branch and you will get this info first-hand. I know Rossland will host 1986 Zone Darts and Nelson will do the same for the Legion Zone Curling this coming spring. He congratulated Grand Forks on the Zone Golf Tourney which hosted 76 members and earned some \$600.

On membership, it was brought up that grandchildren of vets should be given the chance at membership and that Fraternal members should be allowed more input into the branch. I know that Rossland has an excellent group of Fraternals who do a real good job for us.

Branch activity reports for 1985 showed that they have been busy with varied degrees of a successful year. Sale of tulip bulbs was high on the list, others included renovation of premises, Grand Forks, Nakusp did work on their cenotaphs and Salmo will erect a new cenotaph next year, the ground work for which was done this year. All reported work on the coming celebration of our 60th anniversary.

Ladies Auxiliary Zone Commander Dorothy Gyte of Rossland gave a very good report on L.A. activities and hoped that the trend towards L.A. members taking up Legion membership would not go so far as to deplete the ranks of the L.A., saying that their numbers had gone down some in 1985.

The subject of "Where do we go from here?" took up some time. Several subjects were approached and suggestions made ranging from enlivening our meetings to prevent boredom, sending young associates to provincial conventions to give them a taste of the Legion's business, and follow up on new members to get them to take a more active role in the organization. Jaimier Hall of Trail, a very experienced Legion executive, says we have to change the face of the Legion, get more young people active as these are the people who the Legion has to depend upon in the future.

All in all the input was terrific and we shall look for some progress in the follow-up suggestions.

Til next time, then!