

THE RURAL YOUTH MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A BRIEF HISTORY

COLLATED BY P.C. ANGOVE

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The author of this history knows full well that he is dealing with the history of a national movement. He knows that ideas and principles, some so old and crumbling, and some so new and bold, bear all the marks of change and progress. He has seen the birth-throes of the organisation, the earnest grappling with error, and the painful searching after truth, which has led the Rural Youth Movement of SA to its present high status in the community.

Indeed, Rural Youth members are as enterprising and as vigorous today as they were when the movement was born some 27 years ago.

This history could not be understood without a background of the very major social changes that have occurred within the community during those 27 years.

From 1952 to 1974, the last year in which records were kept, the number of rural workers fell from 42 000 to 27 000, that is 31 p.c. From 1952 to 1978, the number of people in Adelaide increased from 60.6 p.c. to 72.3 p.c. of the State population; motor cars increased from 109 000 to 534 000; secondary schools from 78 to 237; savings bank deposits from \$207m to \$2 021m. And probably most important of all, the "Age of Majority Act" was proclaimed in April, 1971. This Act admitted 18-year-olds to all the privileges of adulthood including the right to drink in hotels until 10 p.m.

Is it any wonder that ideas and principals have changed? Indeed, it is remarkable that youth has maintained its balance so well in such a rapidly changing society.

EARLY DAYS

In the postwar era towards the end of the 1940s, the world was clamouring for more and more food and fibre.

The Government of the day saw this as a challenge and decided that the establishment of young farmer clubs could help meet the problem.

The Agricultural Bureau had been operating successfully as a mutual discussion and learning group since 1888. The Women's Agricultural Bureau was founded in 1907 and towards the end of the 1920s a Junior Agricultural Bureau was formed. This Junior Bureau was confined to boys only and it was basically run as a means of teaching technical agriculture. In many cases meetings were held in school hours, but enthusiasm was never high.

Inspired by the ideas of calf clubs in Great Britain, 4H clubs in the USA and apparently successful Junior Farmer Clubs in other states of Australia, the then Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Sir George Jenkins, discussed the matter in Cabinet, and in June, 1950, appointed a Provisional Council "to confer with the Director of Agriculture to explore the possibilities of establishing a Junior Farmer Organisation in South Australia and to suggest ways and means of controlling and financing the organisation."

This Provisional Council recommended that the Government sponsor a Junior Farmer organisation, that Education Department and agribusiness be encouraged to participate, and that a General Supervisor be appointed.

The recommendation was accepted by the Government and a permanent Rural Youth Council was appointed early in 1951.

The members of the first Rural Youth Council were:

Dr. (now Sir Allan) Callaghan, Director of Agriculture (Chairman)
Mr. A.R. Ninnes, Department of Education
Mr. C.R. Kelly, Advisory Board of Agriculture
Mr. H.J. Finnis, Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of SA Inc.
Sir Oscar Isaachson, Financial Institutions
Mr. H. Plumridge (Editor of The Chronicle)
Mr. R.R. Stewart (Editor of The Adelaide Stock and Station Journal)
Mr. C.C. Wicks (SA General Manager, Australian Broadcasting Commission).
Mrs. S. Perrin, Women's Agricultural Bureau.

In the year of appointment Sir Oscar Isaachson died and Mr. A.A. West was appointed as the representative of financial interests. Mr. Kelly resigned and Mr. D. Cram was appointed in his place.

The duties of the Council were "to act as the sponsors and counsellors of the movement during its formative stages and act in a general directive capacity when the movement was finally established".

APPOINTMENT OF ADVISERS

Before launching, the name of the movement was established as the Rural Youth Movement of South Australia because it had been decided that both boys and girls would be included, and that social and cultural interests would be followed in addition to agriculture.

Mr. P.C. Angove was appointed the first General Supervisor in December, 1951. Following the promotion of Mr. Angove in 1955, the title was changed and Mr. A.T. Hooper was appointed Senior Adviser.

Mr. Angove became Senior Extension Officer and finally Chief Extension Officer of the Department of Agriculture and during this time was still responsible for oversight of the movement.

Mr. Hooper continued as Senior Adviser for nearly 17 years until he retired in January, 1972.

On his retirement, he was not replaced.

In about 1966, Mr. P.D. Guerin joined the advisory staff as second in command but without status. On the retirement of Mr. Hooper, Mr. Guerin continued as officer in charge but still with the title of Adviser, Rural Youth. He resigned early in 1976.

For a period of five years, the staff reached a maximum of five advisers and a table appears to be the best way to show this:

<u>Advisers, Rural Youth</u>		<u>Total</u> <u>Advisers</u>
1952	P.C. Angove	1
1953	P.C. Angove, J.D. Butterworth, J.D. Hutton	3
1954	P.C. Angove, J.D. Butterworth, J.D. Hutton, J.D. Playford	4
1955-) 56)	A.T. Hooper, J.D. Butterworth, J.D. Hutton, J.D. Playford	4

<u>Advisers, Rural Youth (cont.)</u>		<u>Total Advisers</u>
1957-) 62)	A.T. Hooper, M.C. Glenn, J.S. McLachlan, J.D. Playford	4
1963-) 65)	A.T. Hooper, M.C. Glenn, W.T. McEwin, J.D. Playford	4
1966	A.T. Hooper, M.C. Glenn, W.T. McEwin, P.D. Guerin	4
1967-) 72)	A.T. Hooper, M.C. Glenn, W.T. McEwin, P.D. Guerin, R.K. Baker	5
1973-) 75)	P.D. Guerin, M.C. Glenn, R.K. Baker	3
1976	M.C. Glenn, R.K. Baker both absent through illness	0
1977-) 78)	Mrs. J. Bouwer	1
1979	Mrs. J. Bouwer (on leave)	0

All of these advisers worked hard and they worked long hours of overtime, including Saturdays and Sundays. They were all dedicated officers who worked for the sake of the movement rather than the cash reward.

None of them received a financial reward for their overtime efforts, but in later year, some advisers did receive time-off in lieu of overtime worked.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the first duties of Mr. Angove as General Supervisor was to design a badge for members. The triangular badge signifying a "Chain of Endeavour" has come through unaltered to the present day. Much has been written about the significance of the badge and it would be ponderous to repeat it here.

A coloured brochure was produced to help advertise the movement and this set forth the then aims and objects so clearly that one could not do better than to quote from it:

"The aims of the Rural Youth Club are simple and direct. They are:

- To learn some of the problems of agriculture.
- To achieve something and aim at leadership.
- To lead a full life.
- To inspire interest in community organisations, especially the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia."

A Rural Youth Club was defined as:

"A society of young people who meet together to enjoy themselves and at the same time, learn something of their country and the joys that come from helping others. The club caters for boys and girls from both city and country, and its aims are to interest all members in rural affairs. The movement is non-sectarian and non-political."

"There are two types of clubs:

Junior Rural Youth Clubs for boys and girls 11 to 15 years.

Senior Rural Youth Clubs for boys and girls 16 to 21 years."

EARLY ACTIVITIES

Junior Rural Youth members undertook small individual projects for which they were awarded badges according to the stage of progress achieved. Several useful bulletins were produced specifically for these projects but these, together with the badges, disappeared long ago.

Senior Rural Youth clubs concentrated on the meeting of members. Mutual problems were discussed and there were talks and demonstrations. Camps, tours, inter-club visits, inter-club contests and interstate and overseas tours were all foreshadowed as part of the activities of members.

ADULT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

From the start it was laid down that:

"Every club will have an adult Advisory Committee to encourage and guide members unobtrusively in club affairs."

It was suggested that any of the following might be pleased to nominate members to the Committee:

Parents, local business houses, local schoolmasters, local Agricultural Bureaux, Country Womens Association and/or Women's Agricultural Bureaux.

"The committee would consist of nominees from all or some of these and there might be others who would like to join."

Through the years, these adult advisory committees have played a vital role in the guidance of clubs and no praise can be too high for them.

In later years, senior members moved from club membership to advisory committee membership. This was highly desirable because of the younger outlook of these people. To ensure some differentiation, however, between club membership and advisory committee membership it is currently laid down that no person shall be appointed to an advisory committee before reaching the age of 27 years.

CLUB FORMATION

In early years, club formation was very rapid. The first club was a junior club formed at Spalding on July 19, 1952. The second junior club and the first senior club were formed at Clare in the same month.

Although details of many individual club formations have been lost overall figures to indicate a trend are available.

No records for junior clubs have been kept since 1963, and indeed, for a five-year period during the mid 1960s, there are no records at all, but for the purpose of this history, a five-year trend will probably give the picture:

	<u>Juniors</u>		<u>Seniors</u>		<u>Grand Total</u>	
	<u>No. of Clubs</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>	<u>No. of Clubs</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>	<u>No. of Clubs</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
1953	12	306	9	224	21	530
1958	32	1 087	61	2 010	93	3 097
1963	33	1 130	81	3 560	114	4 690
1968			80	3 008		
1973	No records					
1974			73	2 638		
1977	Latest available		63	2 000 (estimated)		

In 1977, it was believed that there was only one junior club operating and it was recommended that this be closed.

ORGANISATION

A formal constitution has been adopted only this year (1979), but an early proposed constitution defined the structure of the movement as follows:

- Members
- Junior clubs
- Senior clubs
- Zone committees
- Zone conferences
- State Management Committee
- Rural Youth Council

This structure was obviously not achieved quickly and it is currently undergoing a major revision which is defined in the constitution.

Further, it ignores in full the Australian Council of Rural Youth.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF RURAL YOUTH

This Council was formed about 1951 before Rural Youth was launched. It was formed for the purpose of providing a forum for the various State movements to discuss their mutual problems and to co-ordinate their activities where possible.

Whoever may claim to be the mentor of this Council, it was undoubtedly Mr. Noel Griffiths, Public Relations Officer of the Rural Bank of NSW, who was the driving force in early years.

Membership was restricted to adults and notably, nominees of Royal Show societies were included.

In some years, meetings did little more than argue about their purpose, and about the constitution. Eventually, the Council settled down to its one main task and that was the organisation of exchangees both into and out of Australia. This task it has performed well.

A direction from the SA Rural Youth Council in 1955 that it was a co-ordinating body rather than administrative one was slowly accepted, but is now acknowledged.

As the years moved on, three important events occurred around this Council.

Firstly, and most importantly, members themselves were nominated by their respective State Councils to be representatives on the Australian Council.

Next, the Australian Council organised an Australia-wide conference for members as a whole to discuss a topic of some important social concern. This convention is still held annually and attracts wide interest.

Finally, in the early 1960s, the Executive, which comprised exclusively State Senior Advisers, launched a Rural Youth Foundation. This was designed to provide further education for advisers and to provide funds for social research. However, it met with no public support and, after a number of years, died a natural death.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORGANISATION

Apart from the "Chain of Endeavour" symbolised by the badge, there was no organisation or constitution when the Rural Youth Movement of SA was launched.

The first glimmering of an organisation within the movement itself was the holding of two rallies in 1953 on a very broad district basis. The first which was held at Balaklava, which covered clubs in all northern areas and the second at Victor Harbor for southern district clubs.

The beginning of the zone system came in 1954 when Rural Youth Adviser Mr. J.D. Hutton was transferred to Mt. Gambier to establish a co-ordinate South-Eastern clubs.

Shortly after, there was a move from members themselves that they should have a voice in the organisation and the running of their own movement.

This led to the formal establishment of eight zones in the State and subsequently, of course, to zone conferences.

Later, the zones were extended to twelve and they normally met three times a year. Resolutions from the zones were sent to Rural Youth Council direct.

In addition to advising individual clubs, it was the duty of Rural Youth Advisers to attend each of these zone conferences, together with the annual rally organised by each zone. This led to an enormous work load for each of the advisers, but it persisted, largely on the advisers' insistence, until the early 1970s when advisers were withdrawn. While the change of withdrawing advisers were traumatic, the organisation has continued to function reasonably satisfactorily.

STATE COMMITTEE OF RURAL YOUTH

It was obviously unsatisfactory that each zone should send resolutions direct to Rural Youth Council, and in fact, many of these resolutions were withdrawn before consideration by Council.

Council did, however, recognise the frustration of members and it agreed in early 1956 that a State Committee of Rural Youth should be formed. This committee was to consist solely of active members of Rural Youth and each of the eight zones was to have the right to elect one member.

The State Committee met for the first time early in 1958 with the following elected members:

Robert McGregor Stacey (Chairman), David Ragless, John Crompton, Beven Martlew, Eric Jenkin, Neil Henderson, Gavin Dunn, Mrs. Shirley Mitchell.

In those formative days, the duties of State Committee were to appraise resolutions from the zones before forwarding them to Council and they also had the right to send forward ideas of their own. Similarly, the committee was expected to promulgate through the movement any ideas of the Council.

State Committee has developed greatly since those times. With the expansion to 12 zones and the right of each zone to elect two members, the committee did become a large working committee.

About 1970, the title was changed to State Management Committee and subsequently the Committee has in fact become the management committee of the organisation.

Today, they not only consider resolutions, but they co-ordinate dates for conferences, rallies, combined activities, competitions, and all matters that may affect more than one zone.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RURAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Rural Youth Council has always comprised nominees appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and until recently, they were appointed for an indefinite period.

In effect, this meant that after appointment, an individual continued as a member of Council until such time as he or she resigned, retired, or died.

In consequence, many individuals were members for long periods.

Following pressure for direct membership representation on Council Mr. P.S. Gill was appointed in early 1964. Later in the same year, Mr. John F. Petch was appointed.

In 1965, Mr. Gill became 25 but "his contributions to Council has been so valuable" that he was invited to continue as a member.

INCREASE IN AGE LIMIT

Very early in the history, members indicated that they wanted the age limit raised to 25 years.

Arguments in favour of this change included, firstly, that members were not ready to move to an adult organisation at 21 years and, secondly, that most national competitions were open to members up to 25 years.

In 1955, Council agreed that members from 22 to 25 years could become "Associate members". These members would not be eligible for major awards or for club office.

In 1959, Council agreed to lift the age limit to 25 years without restriction.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTION

Towards the end of the 1950s it became popular for organisations to have a constitution. The Agricultural Bureau, Women's Agricultural Bureau and Rural Youth Movement had continued throughout their existence until that time without constitutions, but quite suddenly, all three organisations were looking for one.

A constitution for Rural Youth was first raised in Council in 1960 and was sent back to the members for reconsideration.

This Council practice continued for the next five or six meetings until 1962 when a set of rules for the movement was approved. The objectives as stated were not approved on the grounds that they would be restrictive.

At this stage, the matter appears to have lapsed at Council level. A constitution was printed in 1967, but approvals for it are not clear and it did not ever have formal status.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In early days both the Government and private industry were keen to support Rural Youth financially.

The maximum annual Government contribution, when salaries, travelling expenses, and overheads of employed officers were considered, amounted to nearly \$60 000 a year, a very large amount compared to Government contributions to all other youth organisations.

RURAL YOUTH CONTRIBUTIONS FUND

From the outset, many business firms and companies were keen to sponsor various competitions, but these offers were temporarily resisted because of the gross faults in 4H competitions in the USA.

As an alternative, a Rural Youth Contributions fund was established in 1953. The aims in brief were:

- *To provide or subsidise expenses for travel.*
- *To provide or subsidise charges for lodging.*
- *To provide prizes for approved competitions or activities.*

As far as is known, the first contribution was of fifty pounds from the ES & A Bank Ltd., and this was used to send a boy and a girl to the Perth Royal Show.

For some years, many business houses together contributed more than one thousand pounds a year to this fund, which was used exclusively for the benefit of Rural Youth.

Later, clubs themselves became the major contributors, but over the years, the Rural Credits Development Fund of the Reserve Bank has probably been one of the most generous donors.

Today, a large sum of money is raised each year from a lottery conducted by members themselves.

EXCHANGEES

Exchangees with overseas countries and interstate have always been dependent on the availability of non-government funds.

The first overseas exchangee into South Australia was a girl from California in early 1953. This visit was not a success. However, later in 1953 two very charming people in the persons of Gerald Morel from Wyoming and Audrey Mooy from Indiana more than smoothed over early troubles. Overseas exchangees were off to a good start.

In South Australia, after considerable debate, it was agreed to send a girl rather than a boy as a first exchangee to Great Britain. Wendy Moyle (now Crawley) was chosen and she travelled as part of an Australian group by courtesy of the P & O Company.

Early in 1954 Andrew Thomas won a trip to New Zealand and in 1955, Robert Stacey of Jamestown won a "round the world" trip following the provision of six hundred pounds by the Rural Credits Development Fund for this purpose.

Interstate visits and tours have been generously supported by the various State Royal Show Societies throughout the years and there is no doubt that but for this sponsorship these visits would not have eventuated.

Before the establishment of Rural Youth, the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia ran a camp on the Showgrounds for 15 South Australian boys and one boy from each of the other states of Australia and New Zealand.

In 1954, the society agreed to extend the privilege to include 10 South Australian girls.

In early days, Agricultural Bureau branches were asked to nominate boys for this camp, and for an agricultural school at Roseworthy College. In 1953, no fewer than 185 applications were received from 65 Bureau branches for the 45 places available.

CAMPS AND TOURS

The week-long agricultural school at Roseworthy operated for many years until 1953.

From 1953 to 1955, there was a camp for senior members at Mylor and for juniors at Christies Beach. The activities at these camps comprised mainly public speaking, meeting procedure, program planning and physical and social activities.

Later there came a development of agricultural and livestock tours. These tours were financially supplemented by the Contributions Fund and they covered the widest possible range that could be devised.

There were general tours to Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, the Riverland and interstate. Livestock tours covered dairying, beef cattle, Merino sheep, British breed sheep and pigs. For a while these tours were very popular, but interest slackened when times became difficult for farmers.

COMPETITIONS

Throughout the history of the movement, activities have tended to centre around a great number of awards for various activities.

Industry indicated plainly that it wished to be associated with specific awards rather than the broad concept of the Contributions Fund and this was fully accepted by 1960.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission was the first in the field with a competition for boys only that dates back to the mid-1940s - well before the establishment of Rural Youth.

The P & O Steamship Co. was very early in providing a trip to Great Britain each year for one individual from each State. This was later extended to a very generous award which SA won on several occasions for the best of the six state exchangees.

Many of the awards were generous indeed, but many of them involved departmental officers in long hours of judging and hundreds of miles of travel which were costly to the department.

"Literally scores of private business firms, commercial companies, banks and individuals have sponsored, provided cash, and most importantly provided the time and energy in support of these competitions. Without this help, the competitions would not have been possible."

Royal Adelaide Show week is still the climax of many annual competitions: debating, demonstrations, shearing, cooking, dressmaking, stock judging and so on. These activities are all stimulating and they all have led to a cohesive movement.

ROYAL SHOW BALL

The first annual show week ball held in 1953 in the basement of the Freemason's Hall on North Terrace. Because the movement was so young and attendance was so uncertain, the expenses were guaranteed by the General Supervisor. However, about 100 attended; parents provided the supper, and the occasion was voted a great success.

From that time, the ball has continued as an annual event and attendance grew to a maximum of about 1 300.

For many years it has been customary for the Minister of Agriculture to use this occasion to receive the candidates for "Miss Rural Youth" and to crown the winner.

ROYAL SHOW EXHIBITS

One of the prime attractions of the Royal Show used to be the very large District Exhibits entered by different localities in the State. These included agricultural produce and home crafts of every possible type.

Because of the work involved, the popularity of these waned with exhibitors and the Royal Show Society invited Rural Youth to takeover the exhibits on a smaller scale.

Many clubs staged first class exhibits until 1959 when the format was changed to what was called "Rural Youth Courts".

These courts were intended to depict an agricultural scene of some type, but there was always difficulty in precisely defining judging points. A typical example was one exhibit depicting "bushfire devastation" which showed quite simply, against a black back-drop, one burned log and the skull of a cow.

The "Courts" exhibit was discontinued in 1969.

ROYAL SHOW BUILDING

With the discontinuance of Fertilizer Sales Ltd., a building on Wayville Showground owned by Adelaide and Wallaroo Fertilizers Ltd. became surplus to requirements and was offered to Rural Youth for the nominal figure of \$500.

This two-storey building with display space on the ground floor and a meeting place on the first floor was to provide an ideal venue for Rural Youth on the Showground.

Thanks to the generosity of Stock Journal Publishes Pty. Ltd. in giving the movement the \$500, Rural Youth were able to accept forthwith and use existing funds for adaption of the building.

The building was handed over and was vested in the title of the Minister of Agriculture during the course of the 1973 Royal Adelaide Show.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

At all times, the media has been generous to Rural Youth. In early days, and today, both daily and weekly newspapers are ready to publish newsworthy stories.

For some years, both South Australian weekly agricultural papers ran a special feature for the movement, but members wanted something they could identify as their own and a Rural Youth Leaders Handbook which subsequently ran to three editions was first published in March, 1955. After a long out-of-print period it was followed by a loose-leaf "Know your movement" folder in 1967.

Various magazines and news-sheets have been available for varying periods.

The first was published by a New South Wales private company and was known as the "Young Farmer magazine". It disappeared in 1957.

In 1964 "The South Australian Young Farmer" was also published privately but it never had the blessing of the Rural Youth Council.

A news sheet known as "Myalla" was published quarterly for a number of years by the Department in the early 1970s before giving way to the current "Crow Call" which is a monthly news sheet compiled entirely by members.

Crow Call consists of six pages of current news stories, pictures and publicity items. It carries no advertising and meets the needs of members in a better manner than previous commercial attempts.

PROPOSAL FOR A HOSTEL

As members had always desired a central meeting place of their own a sub-committee of Council was appointed in 1965 to investigate the proposal.

The first concept was for a building that would provide large and small meeting rooms with appropriate facilities.

Later, the concept was extended to include accommodation for up to 100 in motel type rooms, sporting facilities, and a swimming pool.

Various sites, including Urrbrae, Blackwood and Northfield were examined. The original request to the Government in 1965 for a grant of \$40 000 was finally raised to \$420 000 in 1968.

It is interesting that the Government approved, provided that members contributed one third of the cost over the next ten years. This meant that members would have to undertake to contribute \$14 000 a year, or approx. \$6 a head a year.

As it was considered that future members could not be committed to this the application was withdrawn in 1973.

THE GREAT CHANGE

Towards the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s members were demanding not only a greater voice in the running of their movement but in addition, a voice in current affairs concerning the State.

It was with difficulty that they were persuaded that it was inappropriate for them to write direct to Members of Parliament and, in addition, one or two major political errors were committed.

These activities were the forerunner, and possible led to a series of events that were to change the whole direction of the Movement. A state of indecision existed for some four or five years and during this period, members carried on as best they could with minimal assistance.

In 1971, a formal move was made by the Department of Agriculture to transfer administration of the movement to the Education Department. This dragged on until 1973 when the application was refused.

In the meantime, the Senior Adviser retired and was not replaced pending the outcome of the Education Department decision.

A new Minister of Agriculture was appointed who decreed that the Department of Agriculture should assist in teaching agriculture to Rural Youth and that the Movement should be responsible for its own activities.

The illness of the Chairman of the Rural Youth Council for a prolonged period led to there being very few meetings of Council. No meeting was held in 1974 and subsequent meetings were in March, 1975, December, 1975 and November, 1976.

Eventually in late 1976, a working party under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. Hill, a very long-standing member of Council, was set up to review the whole of the aims and activities of the movement.

A report from this working party presented as a Green Paper in May, 1977, is too voluminous to discuss in detail.

It is, however, a masterpiece of clear English, clear thinking, and it lays down clear guidelines for the future.

Probably one of the most helpful passages is as follows:

"It is inevitable that traditional attitudes will persist if there is no understanding of changes in the support system and there should be no criticism of a movement with a geographically scattered membership because of this.

"After many years of administration verging on the autocratic, the movement has fairly suddenly found its support drastically diminished, and while it would be correct to acknowledge that some activities have become rather sloppy as a result, it would be equally correct to assert that the membership has coped with a difficult situation with praiseworthy vigor and initiative.

"It is recommended that a clear statement of future changes and intentions be made as soon as possible, with a reassurance of continued basic support at whatever the minimum level may be."

THE PRESENT

As a result of the many forces influencing the movement in recent years, and the great number of changes which have occurred within and outside the movement, the year 1979 can be regarded as one of historic significance in the progress of Rural Youth.

The Green Paper, which was comprehensively discussed by the entire movement, included a draft constitution which in turn attempted to integrate the regional plans of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with all the requirements of the movement, including the geography of the previous zone structure.

Although it was decided within the movement that the five regions of the Department could not fully meet the needs of the movement, a practical compromise was reached with seven Rural Youth "Areas" in place of the previous 12 "Zones" and the movement has been restructured accordingly.

By mid-1979 the constitution had been tidied up as necessary by the office of the Crown Solicitor and it has had final approval by the Rural Youth Council.

It has also been decided that the movement will become an incorporated body.

In the course of all this, the composition of Council was changed to comprise a chairman appointed by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, three members from the public sector, three members from the private sector and four members from various levels of the movement. The new Council became operative from July 1, 1979.

It can be said, therefore, that a great many of the confusions and uncertainties of recent years have been solved, but pretty much simultaneously with the movement's arrival at this point of revised and formalised structure, new problems have arisen from massive cuts in Commonwealth extension grants.

The next period of Rural Youth history will undoubtedly cover moves towards even greater responsibility for administration and financing of the movement by itself.

Note: A photographic record of Rural Youth from 1952 to about 1957 is held in the museum of Roseworthy Agricultural College where it is available for inspection.

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