

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

On 1st September the Society was addressed by Mr. C. F. T. Jackson, M.B.E., whose subject was "The Scout Movement—the Beginning, the Progress, but not the End."

On the beginning and the progress Mr. Jackson is uniquely qualified to speak. As a boy he was a member of the first patrol formed in Australia (1908); he has been connected with Scouting ever since, and is now the longest-serving Scout in the world.

In his talk Mr. Jackson briefly traced the origin of Scouting from Mafeking and before—from the time when Baden-Powell, as a young officer in the 5th Dragoon Guards, trained his troopers to scout. Then he turned to the beginning of Scouting in Australia, and thence to its beginnings in Illawarra, and its history and continuing growth to the present. Mr. Jackson has presented a copy of his script to the Society, and an extract (slightly abridged) covering the vital early years in this district appears below. (Following a very respectable literary tradition—at least as old as Julius Caesar—Mr. Jackson writes in the third person, but no prizes are offered for identifying "the Port Kembla Scoutmaster").

Incidentally, we were pleased to find our own President getting a Mention in Dispatches!

South Coast Scouting, 1922-1929

It all really started in August 1922 when Rev. D. J. Knox formed and registered the 1st Wollongong (St. Michael's) Troop with himself as Scoutmaster. However, the Troop ceased to function at the beginning of 1923, and two Scouts who used to travel in from Port Kembla, Gordon Pratt and Jim Collins, asked Gordon's father to start a Troop at Port Kembla. Mr. A. P. Pratt co-opted Mr. H. R. Lee, and in April 1923 the Port Kembla Troop started.

In August 1923 District Scoutmaster C. F. T. Jackson, of the Eastern Suburbs District of Sydney, was invited by Mr. (later Sir) Kelso King, Chairman of the State Executive Committee and a Director of the E.R. & S. Company, Port Kembla, to accept a position in the Electrical Department of that Company for six months to reside in Port Kembla and help in the development of Scouting there, for that period.

On 27th August Charles Jackson took up residence in Port Kembla, and the following night became Scoutmaster of the Troop, small in numbers, but very keen. The Troop grew in numbers and enthusiasm with excellent support from the townspeople and the industries.

In November 1923 a Cub Pack was formed at Port Kembla with Mr. W. A. Walls as Cubmaster, and at the request of Rev. D. J. Knox the 1st Wollongong (St. Michael's) Troop was re-formed and started on its way by the Port Kembla Scoutmaster, who enlisted Mr. J. B. Wells and trained him as Scoutmaster.

Early in 1924, Miss E. Pringle of Austinmer asked Port Kembla Troop to start a Troop and Pack at Austinmer. They agreed and the Scoutmaster, with the help of the Troop had The Austinmer Troop registered in March 1924 with Mr. P. J. Moore as Scoutmaster, and a Cub Pack registered in April with Mr. J. Parkes as Cubmaster.

It is important to note here the time and travel necessary in forming and developing Scouting. Take the case of Austinmer. There had to be a weekly visit and the timetable for Port Kembla's Scoutmaster was as follows:-

- 5 p.m.—Finish work at E.R. & S. Co. Walk to Railway. Train to Thirroul.
- 6 p.m.—Meal in Thirroul. Walk to Austinmer.
- 7 p.m.—First Meeting. Committee at first, then Cubs.
- 8 p.m.—Second Meeting. Scout Troop, and Court of Honour.
- 10 p.m.—Walk to Thirroul. Catch 11 p.m. train to Port Kembla. Walk to Staff Quarters (where he lived) arriving about 12.30 a.m.

For the weekly visit to Wollongong the routine was similar except that sometimes it was possible to get THE bus home about 10 p.m., or walk.

However, these activities generated a wide interest in Scouting, and Port Kembla Troop received requests from other towns to help them form Troops, so Charles Jackson agreed to stay a little longer.

He discussed these new requests with the Parents' and Supporters' Committee and the Chief Commissioner for New South Wales, Mr. Raymont Moore. All agreed that a District Association should be formed to promote and direct Scouting on the South Coast.

At this time there was only one other District Association in New South Wales (just formed at Newcastle), and Branch Headquarters was very dubious about the ability of a small centre like Port Kembla, or even the South Coast, to form and sustain a District Scout Association.

To establish their credentials the Port Kembla Troop set out to organise a State Scout "Corroboree" at Port Kembla during Easter 1924. The Chief Commissioner disallowed the name "Corroboree," as that was reserved for Inter-State Scout Gatherings, so it was called "A Port Kembla Muster." The site selected was Red Point, Port Kembla.

The "Muster" was a great success. Attendance was over 450 Scouts from all parts of New South Wales. The organisation was excellent and through good public relations created a very good impression of Scouting. Over 2,000 of the public attended the various activities as spectators. So the Chief Commissioner agreed to allow Port Kembla Troop Committee to form a South Coast District Association. Messrs. Lee and Jackson approached a number of influential people between Austinmer and Dapto, and all agreed to become active members.

The inaugural meeting was held in the Wollongong Council Chambers on June 24th 1924. The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Raymont Moore, presided and announced the appointment of Mr. H. R. Lee as District Commissioner, and Mr. C. F. T. Jackson as District Scoutmaster.

The following were elected Foundation Officers and Members of the South Coast District Scout Association:-

President: Alderman Norman Smith, Mayor of Wollongong; Vice-Presidents: J. Beatson, J. G. Fairley; Hon. Treasurer: W. J. Cochrane; Hon. Secretary: C. F. T. Jackson; Committee: R. J. Craig, V. Wilson,

C. Church, J. Beatson, P. Pratt, H. A. Greenwood, J. S. Learmonth, G. F. Blandy, J. G. Fairley, J. Gorrell, G. Lindsay, J. Jarvis, J. S. Kirton, Dr. L. Featherstone, J. B. Wells.

Following the formation of the District Association there was steady growth of Scouting and the District Association was indeed kept busy. In these early days, Mr. Jackson as District Scoutmaster had to travel around to the troops. He depended mainly on the train service for transport, but very often made the journey from Wollongong to Port Kembla on foot. Mr. H. R. Lee was most generous in placing his car at the disposal of the District Scoutmaster when possible. However, with the expanding number of troops, the District Scoutmaster found it necessary to acquire an "Indian Chief" Motor Cycle and Sidecar, and in January 1925 the Association helped with the travelling expenses.

(To Be Continued)

SOUTH COAST SCOUTING, 1922-1929:

(Continued from October Bulletin)

At the end of June 1925 the following new Troops had been formed and were functioning under Scouters:

1st Keiraville Troop; September 1924; Scoutmaster, W. Ellis.

1st Woonona Troop; September 1924; Scoutmaster, R. Cornwell.

1st Bulli Troop; November 1924; Scoutmaster, J. Matthews.

1st Mt. Kembla Troop; February 1925; Scoutmaster, F. Bott.

Also these Wolf Cub Packs:

1st Port Kembla Pack; November 1923; Cubmaster, W. Walls.

1st Austinmer Pack; February 1924; Cubmaster, J. Parkes.

1st Wollongong Pack; June 1924; Cubmaster, J. Mitchell.

1st Bulli Pack; December 1924; In Charge, J. Mitchell.

1st Woonona Pack; June 1925; Cubmaster, J. Clark.

In order to promote interest in the Troops, District displays were organised by Mr. Jackson, and the first District Rally was held in the Wollongong Showground on 18th December 1924 and was attended by 53 Port Kembla, 52 Wollongong and 31 Austinmer Scouts and Cubs.

The Second Rally was held at Woonona on 4th April 1925. Woonona had 30 Scouts and Cubs, Wollongong 42, Bulli 31, and Austinmer 16. Port Kembla had 13 "Cyclist Scouts."

These Rallies did much to educate the general public in Scouting, and showed what Scout training was doing for the boys. The first Scouts Own was held in the Wollongong Town Hall on 24th May 1925. Seven Troops were represented, with a total of 206 boys. The Mayor of Wollongong, Alderman N. M. Smith, presided and the address was given by the District Commissioner, Mr. H. R. Lee.

This function was the beginning of the big State "Scout Week." To assist State Headquarters to raise £10,000 the District conducted a big stall in Customs House Square, Sydney, on May 29th. and raised £50. In addition to this, buttons and badges sold by Troops realised £50.

From 28th June to 9th July, 1925, the 4th Interstate Corroboree was held in Queensland. The South Coast was represented by 11 Scouts from Port Kembla and seven from Wollongong under District Scoutmaster Jackson and Scoutmaster J. B. Wells. These were all First Class Scouts, and took part in the 40 mile trek over mountainous country to the Corroboree ground, in the Lamington National Park—a real adventure.

Troop Leader Jim Collins of Port Kembla was selected to repre-

sent the South Coast at the International Jamboree at Copenhagen and London in 1924. At the end of June 1925, after one year's organisation, the Troops numbered 7, Packs 5 and the total membership 295, showing an increase of 165 members.

During the first year arrangements were made with State Headquarters for the purchase and resale of equipment and uniforms, resulting in a good uniform appearance of all Scouts in the District. Trading was operated from the District Scoutmaster's Office.

The first year's work in the organisation of the District was undertaken by Mr. Jackson. He was the Secretary to the District Association and besides his field work as District Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster 1st Port Kembla, had all the clerical work of organising functions, etc., to attend to.

During the second year twelve new Troops were formed and five new Packs, making a chain of Troops from Austinmer to Pambula. Two Senior Scoutmasters were appointed to assist the District Commissioner and District Scoutmaster. They were Rev. L. M. K. Mills of Nowra and Mr. J. B. Wells of Wollongong.

On March 1st 1926, Miss D. Browne was appointed full time Secretary to the District, and a District Headquarters Office was opened at 49 Crown Street, Wollongong. Relieved of some of the duties of Secretarial work, the District Scoutmaster was able to devote more time to the organisation and instruction of the Scouts, and during this year he travelled 4,726 miles.

The highlight of 1927 was the Tasmanian Corroboree when 30 S.C. & T. Scouts attended as a "non-recognised" Troop, but somehow stole all the limelight of public relations, and finished up with "The Freedom of the City of Launceston" for 24 hours.

In December 1929 our District organised and conducted the Australian Corroboree to commemorate the "Coming of Age" of Scouting. It was held at Primbee Point on Lake Illawarra and attended by Scouts from all States. The Governor General, Lord Stonehaven, stayed in camp for 3 days. The highlight was the hike to Kangaroo Valley. We also sent four representatives to the "Coming of Age" Jamboree in England. They were Jack Sykes, Frank Tier, Rod Townsend and Harold Haworth.

—C. F. T. JACKSON.

(Concluded)