

# THE SOCIETY OF PRACTISING VETERINARY SURGEONS

Its Origins, and Early History from 1933-1950.

by

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The object of this review of the early history of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons is to trace its origins through the formation of the Veterinary Practitioners League in 1933, the change of title to the Society of Veterinary Practitioners in 1934 and so to the name by which it is known today at the AGM in 1950.

It was Hubert Andrew of Paisley, President SPVS 1984/85, who suggested to me in 1983 that I should undertake this task. As I did in fact join the Society in 1934 as my membership card shows, and I am one of the very few active surviving members from those days I felt I ought to make the effort. And I have indeed revived many happy memories in so doing.

Emphasis has inevitably been laid on the close association and co-operation with the National Veterinary Medical Association throughout as it is impossible to separate the activities of the two organisations. This in itself has created difficulties in telling a straightforward story, and I do hope that I have not made any serious factual omissions or failed to give individual credit where due.

## **PART 1. The Veterinary Practitioners League.** Its origins and the early years to 1934

The Veterinary Practitioners League was the fore-runner of the Society of Veterinary Practitioners and has its origins in two main albeit unrelated roots. The advent of the internal combustion engine in the early 1900's which was to change the emphasis of veterinary practice in the 1920's and 30's away from the horse to farm animals and domestic pets, and the setting up of the Agricultural Advisory Service between 1911 and 1914 in University Departments of Agriculture and in Agricultural Colleges throughout England and Wales.

The Agricultural Advisory Service was intended primarily to pass on the results of research into matters affecting husbandry, plant nutrition and disease, horticulture and the like. But after the 1914/18 war the farming organisations were seeking technical advice on veterinary matters. This led to the appointment of Veterinary Advisory Officers at the Colleges, the first at Cardiff in 1922, Newcastle in 1923, Bangor in 1924 followed by ten other centres over the years to 1943. The officers appointed were directly responsible to the Principals of their institutions, and it was not until 1946 when the National Agricultural Advisory Service was set up that they were absorbed into Animal Health Division. It will be seen that these Veterinary Advisory Officers were in effect free agents in no way subject to overall control as far as policy was concerned.

Meantime there was an increasing public and official awareness of the need to raise the standards of health of dairy herds and improve the supply of fresh milk. Over the years assorted legislation was introduced and thus Section V. of the Milk and Dairies (Consolidation) Act 1915 and Part IV. of the Milk and Dairies Order 1926 provided for the routine inspection of dairy herds, and section 8 of the 1915 Act provided for the specific examination of herds for the detection of cows responsible for T.B. infected milk samples derived from churn samples taken on a dairyman's premises by health inspectors of the Local Authority. The inspections were initiated after a positive six-week guinea-pig test, and were primarily for the detection of T.B. udders. The Tuberculosis Order 1925 provided for the seizure of 'open' T.B cases and the payment of compensation.

Graded milks were covered by the Milk (Special Designations) Order 1923 which provided for Certified (Tuberculin Tested) and Grade 'A' (Tuberculin Tested) herds which were tested and inspected twice yearly, and for Grade 'A' herds which required quarterly clinical inspections only. From these modest beginnings stemmed the Attested Herds Scheme and ultimately the eradication scheme successfully carried out in recent years.

The Ministry of Health was responsible for implementing these Acts and Orders, its agents being the local authorities such as County Councils and City Councils, e.g. Birmingham and Liverpool. The local authorities carried out their duties with varying degrees of enthusiasm and efficiency, the big cities leading the way whilst the county record was exceedingly patchy. However, slowly veterinary staffs were set up, a few with sufficient whole-time officers, others with maybe one or two veterinary officers assisted by general practitioners acting in a part-time capacity as and when required. The Diseases of Animals Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture was not involved in any way, its then modest establishment of 105 veterinary officers was concerned with the then Notifiable Diseases, import and export regulations and the associated quarantine requirements, and the Central Veterinary Laboratory at Weybridge.

New fields of veterinary activity were thus developing together with a new concept of a veterinary career - namely whole-time salaried employment with pension prospects! This offered a sheltered existence with regular hours immune from the exigencies of the day and night fire-brigade service which was, and still is, an essential element of general practice.

The Veterinary Practitioners League, and thus the Society of Veterinary Practitioners, was said by many to have been started by Dr R.F.Montgomery, the V.A.O. at Bangor, It was his activities operating from the University of N.Wales in advising Welsh sheep farmers and treating disease on the farm without reference to the local practitioners that banded the N.Wales practitioners together under the leadership of E.P.Edwards of Mold to found the League in 1933. But concurrently in England and Scotland two factors were causing great concern to country practitioners, the post-war agricultural depression aggravated "by the decline of the horse and the gradual development of the above mentioned county veterinary services encroaching on the implementation of the Designated Milk schemes, with free clinical inspections and In some instances the offer of free or subsidised T.B. tests carried out by the whole-time staffs. Furthermore the veterinary advisory officers, where appointed, were regarded with suspicion not only in Wales but in both England and Scotland.

In 1932 Sydney Jennings, newly qualified and working as an assistant for Harry Steele-Bodger of Tamworth, recalls driving his employer convalescent from a quinsy down to Denbigh to the home of H.Llewellyn Jones to meet E.P.Edwards and other local colleagues to discuss the current state of affairs. The period of gestation was coming to an end} the North Wales Division of the National Veterinary Medical Association had for several years been trying through the parent body and the Ministry of Agriculture to Influence the Principal of Bangor without success. And so, at the A.G.M. of the Division on February 3rd 1933 the President, R.L.Lewis of Llanrwst, in his Presidential Address publicly expressed the members' disquiet at their inability to obtain any form of modification in the operation of the Advisory Service. Thus the scene was set for the N.V.M.A's Congress at Llandudno where on September 20th 1933 'the wild men of N.Wales', as they were known in some N.V.M.A. circles, under the leadership of E.P.Edwards founded the Veterinary Practitioners League. The membership increased rapidly with recruits from all over the U.K. for this was the first time that practitioners had a non-territorial society to represent them, hitherto their representation was fragmented and uncoordinated in local divisions unlike the associations of whole-time officers who had the Association of Veterinary Inspectors of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Scottish Society of Veterinary Inspectors and the County and Municipal Officers Association.

As early as 1930 the N.V.M.A. was urging the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health to set up a Royal Commission to consider the eradication of bovine tuberculosis. The M.of A. rejected the suggestion on the grounds that "the circumstances did not warrant it." Those of us who remember those days knew this to be utter nonsense!

In 1933 the N.V.M.A. was urging the Ministers, the County Councils Association and the Economic Advisory Council to place the routine Inspection of dairy herds under the direction and control of one central Government department with the establishment of a Chief Veterinary Officer, Area and District Veterinary Officers and a staff of general practitioners.

At the January Council meeting of the N.V.M.A. In 1934 E.P.Edwards, who represented the N.Wales division on Council for many years, proposed that the Veterinary Practitioners League "be accepted as a division of the 'National', Council agreed somewhat reluctantly!

The first year was marred by the fact that the President, W.M.Townson of Peterborough, was struck by lightning, he survived but was not fit to take the chair at the first A.G.M. in July 1934, and despite re-election felt unable to accept and was succeeded by O.V.Gunning of Tutbury. Townson's death was noted in the Minutes of a meeting on July 10th.1959. At the first A.G.M. John Cane of Wrexham resigned as Honorary Secretary and Harry Steele-Bodger was elected in his stead agreeing to serve for one year, but he later succumbed to persuasion at considerable cost to himself and his practice and served for over two very strenuous years.

The V.P.L. changed its title to the Society of Veterinary Practitioners at an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting held in Edinburgh on August 2nd 1934. Once established the Society, under the inspired leadership of E.P.Edwards and Harry Steele-Bodger, became a driving force within the N.V.M.A., working not only on behalf of its members but for the advancement of the profession as a whole and as an essential element in the maintenance of the health of farm livestock, and in all other fields of veterinary interest and endeavour.

### **The Uphill Struggle**

The year 1934 was noteworthy for two important events from the Society's point of view. First the willingness of Harry Steele-Bodger to serve as Honorary Secretary and then the publication of the Government's Economic Advisory Council's report from its Committee on Cattle Diseases, set up in 1932 under the chairmanship of Sir Gowland Hopkins, in May 1934. In brief the report proposed the setting up of a veterinary service composed entirely of whole-time officers. Membership of the Society increased by leaps and bounds!

From then on the Society's activities under Harry Steele-Bodger's leadership were closely interwoven with the N.V.M.A.'s unremitting battle over the ensuing 3 1/2 years, to further and uphold the interests of the profession in the face of strong opposition from official Government departments.

In July the membership was 204, and on the basis of one for every 35 members the Society became entitled to six representatives on Council N.V.M.A, and so together with S.V.P. members representing the territorial divisions the Society began to have a coordinated body of opinion at 'National' level, something which previously the practitioners' arm of the profession had lacked.

Apart from urging the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health in 1930 to set up a Royal Commission, the N.V.M.A, had drawn up a draft scheme for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis in the U.K. based on a scheme devised by the Scottish Branch; and by 1933 was recommending "that there should be a State Veterinary Service under one central Government Department of Animal Health and that the veterinary practitioner should be incorporated in the service as well as the whole-time officer."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the N.V.M.A. was far in advance of official thinking at Government level, and when the Gowland Hopkins report was published it immediately formed a Special Committee to examine the report and to "frame proposals showing how best the services of the profession can be utilised."

The report had advocated veterinary services staffed by whole-time officers either under the central control of the Ministry of Agriculture or the existing local authorities; such veterinary officers to be holders of the D.V.S.M.! It envisaged that if a State service was set up that it

would deal with the Scheduled Diseases, T.B., Jonne's disease, brucellosis and mastitis and so although there was provision for the temporary employment of practitioners, if circumstances so required, it was clear the general practitioners of the day were regarded as unfit for employment on a permanent "basis.

At this point the background as seen by the profession, both the N.V.M.A. and the S.V.P. should be considered... The existing legislation and regulations affecting milk supplies were the responsibility of the Ministry of Health although largely delegated to local authorities and were designed for consumer protection, and thus in no way concerned with disease control and/or eradication. Milk from Tuberculin Tested herds under the Certified and Grade "A" T.T. designations was available in limited quantities at premium prices, chiefly from retailer-producers and the smaller dairies but the bulk of wholesale supplies went to the large dairies, eg. United, Express, Cow and Gate etc (note the author lives in S.E.England!) where" pasteurisation plants were being installed and it was freely argued that pasteurisation was the answer to ensuring the safety of milk supplies. Consequently disease control, let alone eradication, took a back seat in the official mind. This was not the view of the veterinary profession or of the more enlightened agriculturists many of whom had an interest in the export of pedigree livestock.

The Gowland Hopkins Committee had only one appointed veterinary member, Major-General Sir John Moore whose distinguished career in the R.A.V.C. hardly fitted him for the task in hand; however he produced a minority report! The Report admittedly recognised the need for and the desirability of disease control in cattle when recommending that a whole-time service be set up. But its exclusion of general practitioners on the grounds "that there is no doubt that employment of part-time officers is generally unsatisfactory", further suggesting that not infrequently a conflict of loyalties would arise did not endear it to the profession.

The S.V.P.'s task therefore in late 1934 and throughout 1935 was, working strictly within the N.V.H.A., to increase its membership and thus its representation on Council N.V.M.A., and to enlighten the membership on the problems ahead\* This latter objective it tackled with a countrywide series of meetings to discuss at local level "The present and future position of veterinary surgeons under County Council authorities and Ministries both as whole-time and part-time officers." But it was also necessary to improve Its image In the eyes of the H.V.H.A.

The relationship between the two at this time was marred by the Association's suspicions as to the intentions of the Society even after it had been accepted as a Division in January. It was feared that the Society might act like a secret society and take independent action politicking behind the parent body's back. The latter still had vivid memories of the members of the N.Wales Division in their efforts to resolve the problems created by the activities of the veterinary advisory officer at Bangor, as a result of which they were christened "the wild men of N.Wales." The National feared that the S.V.P. might become an even larger and more troublesome rabble, these fears the Society's officers strove to allay. But it is interesting to note from the minutes of the meeting held in Edinburgh on Aug. 2nd 1934 that the President of the N.V.M.A., William Nairn of Blairgowrie, a highly respected senior practitioner addressed the meeting and felt constrained to urge broad-minded and tolerant approaches to the problems ahead of the profession advocating a pragmatic attitude capable of compromise if necessary, and emphasised that representatives elected to serve on Council N.V.M.A. should be men of this nature If they were to further the legitimate interests of the S.V.P. at 'National' level. Wm. Nairn was in fact elected to membership at a subsequent meeting in Edinburgh on Mar.30th 1935!

Harry Steele-Bodger welcoming the President's remarks agreed that tolerance must be the guiding principle of the Society and went on to say "We do not want a Mlu Mlux Mlan. We do not want any Communism. We do not want any extreme Left Wing. What we want is a body to investigate matters that concern us as these come along, and support for our legitimate rights, and to take these matters to our parent body, the National, for their judgment upon our views and if they agree with us all the strenuous action they can take in the matter." From this point on it is fair to say that the attitudes and integrity of both Harry Steele-Bodger and E.P.Edwards and those working with them served to bring about a greatly improved atmosphere at headquarters. E.P.Edwards served for many years on Council N.V.M.A. as representative of the N.Wales Division and had considerable experience of the workings of the National. He was in fact

the mastermind of Society strategy, Harry Steele-Bodger was the active general in the field; a relationship akin to that of Alexander and Montgomery in North Africa, and a very close friendship developed between them greatly to the benefit of the Society.

To make life more difficult for the M.V.H.A. the whole-time veterinary officers, already with their own Divisions within the National, were suspicious of the sudden organisation of general practitioners under the expanding umbrella of the S.V.P, and viewed its activities as likely to be inimical to their long term interests. Thus within the National, the Presidents and senior officers had to perform a difficult tight-rope act to reconcile the conflicting interests and it is greatly to their credit that they did achieve a large measure of agreed compromise proposals which gained wide enough support for them to be adopted as the Association's policy.

### **The N.V.M.A's Proposals.**

The Special Committee under the Chairmanship of Wm.Nairn, the President, and his deputy G. P.Hale of Heading issued its report in December and it was considered at the Council meeting in early January 1935- Its recommendations may be summarised as follows:-

- (a) There should be a Department of Animal Health, preferably as a separate Department, or as a Department of an existing Ministry.
- (b) The Executive should consist of a Principal Veterinary Officer, Area Veterinary Officers, County Veterinary Officers, and Laboratory Officers.
- (c) Panels of Veterinary Practitioners should be created.
- (d) The Principal Veterinary Officer should be directly responsible to the Minister of State.
- (e) The Area Veterinary Officers should coordinate the activities of the County and Municipal veterinary officers and Area Laboratories.
- (f) The County Veterinary Officers should superintend the routine work, which should be carried out by panels of as many veterinary practitioners as can be employed for the purpose. These panels of veterinary practitioners should form a permanent feature of the service.

Having thrashed out these proposals the task of presenting them to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture had its own problems. On the question of practitioner participation they were met by damning assertions of the widespread high percentage of bad reports from general practitioners, stemming in the first instance from the Gowland Hopkins report. Under pressure the authorities admitted that adverse or wrong reports did in fact only come from small areas. Also it was not clear what type of service would be set up and whether it would be under the Ministry of Health or of Agriculture, and what part if any the existing County Council services would play in it. In addition the Milk Marketing Board had to be taken into account as it had an interest in the clean milk aspects of any scheme likely to be introduced; consequently the prospects of the existing whole-time officers were also uncertain and causing them anxiety- The N.V.M.A. had been striving to improve the conditions of service and salaries under local authorities and was anxious,, if possible to improve their lot in whatever service was eventually set up.

The three years 1935/36/37 and the early months of 1938 were to elapse before the final solution on April 1st 1938 with the inauguration of the Animal Health Division under the Ministry of Agriculture.

It may seem strange to many that the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons appears to have played no part in the events of these years. The reason stated simply is that during the 1920's the N.V.H.A., having acquired the Veterinary Record in 1920, was able to represent the interests of all branches of the profession and gradually became the political watch-dog of the profession;

of concerning itself with the conditions of service- and salaries/whole-time officers both at home and abroad in the Colonial services, and also the economic welfare of all other "branches of the profession. The R.C.V.S. concerned itself with the duties imposed upon it by its Charters and recognised that the N.V.M.A. was the active political organisation representing the profession as a whole. As today a number of councillors served on both Councils, thus a free exchange of views was, and is, readily available. The R.C.V.S. was to bear the brunt of the battle to come on veterinary education and the demise of the cherished 'one portal system.

### **The Year of the Questionnaires.**

The Year 1935 kicked off for the S.V.P. with five meetings between February 21st and April 2nd, to discuss the Accredited and Attested herd schemes, the threat of free testing and the clinical inspection of dairy herds. Accredited milk was to receive a premium of 1d. per gallon as May 1st. The Attested Herd scheme had started on February 1st.

The meetings were at Bristol, Stafford, Newcastle, Edinburgh and London giving a fair spread throughout the U.K. A meeting at Tunbridge Wells at the end of June discussed the Cattle Diseases Report and also the recently published Milk (Special Designations) Order 1935 and the threat of free T.B. testing thereunder. It was 'reported by E.P.Edwards that during the previous six years free testing or semi-subsidised testing had been carried out in Scotland in the counties of Lanark, Stirling, Dumbarton, Ayrshire and Dumfries. Paul Crosfield of Chipping Norton reported that all TT milk destined for the City of Birmingham was subject to free testing of the herds by the City's own whole-time veterinary officers over a wide area up to even 45 miles away.

Subsequently the Society sent out a Questionnaire regarding free and subsidised testing to all members, numbering slightly over three hundred.

The N.V.M.A. Congress that year was held in Belfast in July, where amongst other business the Council considered two resolutions submitted by the Society:

- 1). Stressing the serious economic effects on general practice caused "by the increasing growth of free services for TB testing and Accredited herd inspections, which could well lead to the abandonment of practices in some areas, and requesting the N.V.M.A. to set up a committee to consider these matters in all their aspects. The Council agreed to set up a special committee "To discuss the question of free services."
- 2). Recommending that a letter be sent to the chief veterinary officer of each county employing whole-time staff expressing the willingness of all practitioners in the county to co-operate with and work under the supervision of their whole-time officers. The Council also agreed to this proposal.

Subsequently the N.V.H.A. decided to send out its own Questionnaire, to be sent to every veterinary surgeon on the Register in the United Kingdom.

The Society's AGM was held in Birmingham on September 25th when Harry Steele-Bodger was able to announce that the membership stood at 303 making it the largest division in the N.V.M.A. He told the meeting that eleven members were serving on the Council R.C.V.S. and forty on Council N.V.M.A. He mentioned the value of the informal meetings held prior to those of the N.V.M.A, Council which resulted in agreed policies being put. forward.

The President, O.V.Gunning, in his address reviewed the past year and in the course of his remarks on the Gowland Hopkins report the minutes record the following interesting side-light, 1- "Out of eighteen veterinary surgeons who gave evidence before the committee only three were general practitioners and they represented the N.V.M.A., not a single veterinary surgeon was called upon to give evidence in a private capacity. One cannot say therefore that the evidence was of the whole profession."

E.P. Edwards reported on the Questionnaire sent to members dealing with the free and semi-free testing. In Scotland the list of counties reported at the Tunbridge Wells meeting had increased by the addition of Renfrew and Fife. In England Birmingham had been carrying out free testing for 20 years with herds up to 20, 28 and even 45 miles away. Bolton had started but stopped after discussions with the N.V.M.A. Also in England the City of Leeds and the counties of Devon, Herefordshire and Surrey had been taken over by the local authorities (the last county the author well remembers as it cost his partner J.A. Craft of Cranleigh and himself £500 per annum!).

Donald Campbell of Rutherglen was elected as the new President, a particularly apt choice as he was well placed to appreciate the problems affecting Scottish members who were more sorely pressed than their colleagues south of the Border. Harry Steele-Bodger reluctantly agreed to carry on as Honorary Secretary for another year in response to pleas from E.P. Awards and other members present who felt that the Society simply could not do without his drive and enthusiasm.

At this point it is appropriate to mention one of the main difficulties facing the chronicler of these times: the minutes of many meetings simply have not survived! There are none recording the foundation of the Society as the Veterinary Practitioners League or its first year until the ACM on July 19th 1934; from this time up to a meeting in Glasgow at the N.V.M.A. Congress in early September 1938, a period of four years, the attendance book records those present at 47 meetings, 38 general and 9 Council meetings. There are no minutes of the Council meetings, and it is highly probable the Council met on numerous other occasions. Of the 38 general meetings only 18 have survived in minute form, so that of the 47 meetings 29 remain unrecorded. Those that have survived have done so through the courtesy of the Veterinary Record! In the '30s the minutes of many divisional meetings were published, often recorded by W. Brown, MRCVS who was Editorial Representative and attended meetings held in or within a reasonable distance of London, and who was able to take shorthand notes.

Photocopies of the nineteen recorded meetings were taken by the staff of the RCVS Library and are now in the Society's Minute file. From the AGM on October 5th 1938 successive Honorary Secretaries have produced regular minutes, some more extensive and detailed than others.

The N.V.M.A.'s questionnaire was not ready for dispatch until the end of January 1936. No copy of either the N.V.M.A.'s or the Society's questionnaire has yet been found, and consequently the questions therein have had to be inferred from the various discussions recorded in the extensive minutes published in the Veterinary Record.

The first meeting in 1936 on January 7th was held in London, but here again no minutes have survived.

The tensions existing within the profession at this time are high-lighted by correspondence in the Veterinary Record of February 15th. Wm. Tweed writing from County Hall In Taunton on the "Organisation of the Veterinary Profession" concludes his letter:

"The whole-time officer and the practitioner need confidence in each other and loyalty if they are to promote each other's Interests."

On the other hand Hugh Begg, Senr, of Hamilton a respected member of the profession in Scotland wrote fearing the inevitability of a schism in the ranks of the profession, pointing out that "the needless, tactless acidity of much" published in the Record which was causing many whole-time officers to feel uncomfortable and ostracised, with the risk that they might feel forced to secede from the N.V.M.A.

Harry Steele-Bodger, under the heading of "Tolerance", wrote as Honorary Secretary of the S.V.P. appealing for a spirit of tolerance, and stressing that the needs of the profession were reorganisation and co-operation. He emphasised the Society's support for such reorganisation on the lines of the N.V.M.A.'s scheme, which he believed would result in mutual appreciation and co-operation.

A fourth letter from W. Philipson Moss of Woking appeared under the heading of "The Profession and the Encroachments of Bureaucracy" and represented the view of the individualists, neatly summarised when he refers to "a further influx of legislation with inroads upon the liberties of owners of livestock and a choice for veterinary surgeons of regimentation or starvation."

The fears and uncertainties of the time are understandable when one considers the innate conservatism and intense individuality of most practitioners; like-wise whole-time officers for their part had "broken new ground and were looking for stable careers in an expanding field. Fortunately the leaders of the profession within the N.V.M.A. were well aware of the problems and were prepared to strive for an equitable solution in their negotiations with the Establishment.

The N.V.M.A. questionnaire was issued at the end of January and in February the Society promptly started a series of meetings to discuss:-

- 1). The present position of the veterinary practitioner in relation to public services, and his future position and place in such services under the county councils, municipal authorities and the Ministries.
- 2). The bearing of the questionnaire now issued by the N.V.M.A. upon the above, and the vital importance of giving the questionnaire serious and careful consideration.

The first meeting was held in London on February 17th and was chaired by George Elmes of St Albans in the absence of the President, Donald Campbell, who had been taken ill and was recovering in a nursing home.

E.P. Edwards introduced the subjects for discussion with a wide-ranging-address covering the growth of the public services, short-listing the bodies concerned to include the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, the Municipal and County Councils, the Milk Marketing Board, the Agricultural Research Council, the N.F.U., the R.S.P.C.A., the People's League of Health and several others on few of which the veterinary profession, was represented and all of which had an interest and a 'finger in the pie' of the future of the veterinary profession. The limited veterinary representation on the few of the bodies was largely by 'dug-outs' like Sir John Moore, by now aged 68, and/or retired Colonial administrators with little experience of the current problems of British agriculture.

He welcomed the N.V.M.A. scheme with its conception of a Ministry of Animal Health with a veterinary surgeon in control to direct the public health services, co-ordinating all the state, county, municipal and private veterinary personnel into a composite whole which he suggested would realise the professional Motto of "Vis unita fortior". The Gowland Hopkins report he felt could be welcomed in part, but he expressed fundamental disagreement with the exclusion of the general practitioner.

He went on to outline the difficulties facing the N.V.M.A. in their representations to the Ministries of Health and Agriculture and the County Councils Association when pressing for the retention of general practitioners in the veterinary services, which up to that time had not been listened to. He urged members to enlist the support of their local MPs and their local N.F.U. branches.

Whilst admitting that the future was not rosy he contended it was by no means hopeless, and stressed that much of the present position was due to the deplorable apathy of practitioners in the past; he detected an awakening which was to be welcomed, and encouraged.

In discussing the N.V.M.A. questionnaire he chose to epitomise it under six headings-

- 1). "That the economic position of general practice is being made untenable by the uneconomic competition of veterinary officers of local authorities and other bodies."

- 2). "That the free or semi-free TB testing and clinical examination of Accredited Herds constituted 'forms of competition which cannot be justified in the public interest', especially as farmers could afford reasonable fees in order to sell their milk at a premium'."
- 3). "There is no justification for paying for these uneconomic services out of the public rates."
- 4). "That the free choice of agriculturists and others of their veterinary advisers is being denied to them-, and the professional activities of veterinary practitioners are being arbitrarily curtailed."
- 5). "Concerning the advertising of free or semi-free services by circular, press adverts and in the M.M.B's official organ "Horse Farmer" that these forms of services are being publicly advertised."
- 6). "That Interpretations are "being placed' upon the various Acts and Orders by local authorities which axe not justified by the Acts themselves, which react detrimentally upon general practitioners."

The meeting then considered the questionnaire in detail and it is worthwhile listing the questions to appreciate the scope of the N.V.M.A's inquiry:-

Q1. Invited information concerning instances of a number of practices such as State or local authorities offering free services which infringed private practice under the Attested Herds and Accredited Herds schemes.

Q2. Evidence of misinterpretation of Public Health Acts and Orders relating to diseases of animals or meat and milk inspection.

Q3. Evidence of whole-time officers advising clients or prescribing- for them In matters and cases other than those concerned with their official duties.

Q4. Information regarding any free services granted by general practitioners for sick animals of the poor, and in other ways.

Q5. Details of diminution of income from loss of TB testing, clinical herd inspection etc.

Q6. Estimate of loss of income.

Q7. Deprivation of areas of services of general practitioner because of economic losses from the growth of whole-time services.

Q8. This question was addressed to whole-time officers

Q9. Was designed to enquire if practitioners would be willing to serve under the general direction of whole-time officers as proposed in the N.V.M.A. scheme.

Q10. Request for further relevant information.

The questions were spoken to by many of those present with the Hon. Secretary and E.P.Edwards replying and clarifying many of the points and anxieties raised.

The above detailed account of the meeting is given as the six following meetings were conducted in a similar way; and undoubtedly this series of meetings was the most important held by the Society in the pre-war era. They explained to the membership the size and complexity of the

problem facing the profession, and put members clearly in the picture for the first time, assisted subsequently by the publication to a wider audience of the minutes in the Veterinary Record.

The London meeting was reported on March 28th and received 12 1/2 pages, the subsequent meetings were reported en bloc on April 11th and received 16 pages!

The full list of meetings is:-

London, Feb. 17th, Birmingham, 20th. Carlisle, 24th. Leeds, 25th.

Oxford, 26th. Peterborough, 27th. Chester, 28th. Stirling, 29th. (Leap Year!)

Harry Steele-Bodger attended all these meetings, and E.P. Edwards was able to attend four to give his address personally. Eight long meetings held over twelve days and covering such a widespread area must have been extremely arduous, and is an indication of Harry Steele-Bodger's drive and his determination to awaken his professional brethren to the realities of the profession's plight. It is probably a record for the Society which is unlikely ever to be broken.

One of these meetings, that at Oxford, is of particular interest because it was attended by G.P. Male of Reading as a visitor. He was a Past-President of the N.V.M.A. (1929/30.), a doyen among general practitioners, and at the time a member of the Parliamentary, Veterinary Officers and Public Health committees, and as a senior member of the N.V.M.A. had been a representative on numerous deputations involved in negotiations both past and present. He was invited to address the meeting at the outset prior to E.P. Edwards' address, and was able to give members a detailed account of the N.V.M.A.'s view of the situation and the difficulties being encountered.

He commenced by expressing his entire sympathy with the Society's aims and objects as he realised the hardships and grievances of practitioners and the clash of interests between different arms of the profession- Major factors in the development of the situation were the apathy of practitioners themselves, and he regretted to say the opposition of many whole-time officers. The attitude of the latter was particularly disappointing because the N.V.M.A. had done everything to advance the claims of these officers regarding salaries and conditions of service; even to the extent of refusing to advertise posts in the Record which were offering sub-standard salaries, and he felt that they were entitled to a little support from the whole-time men.

He then went on to list the main sources of opposition, the Ministry of Health who considered that public health was their province and who liked veterinary officers to be under the control and supervision of a medical officer; the local authorities who paying part of the cost wanted to call the tune and have control of their veterinary staffs. The farming community were pressing for a whole-time service as this would provide them with free testing and clinical herd inspection; and finally the opposition of the general public who had been taught to believe that the general practitioner was incapable and that the milk supply was not safe in his hands.

Replying to criticisms that the N.V.M.A. had done nothing to help the practitioner he outlined what in fact had been done. It had sent its Scheme for a Department of Animal Health to both Ministries, the Royal Agricultural Society, the Municipal Corporations Association, the County Councils Association and all local authorities; and deputations had waited on many of these bodies. He concluded by congratulating the Society on its efforts to help the practitioner and commended especially the work of the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer.

Between March 31st and September 15th the attendance book records two meetings in London, one of these a council meeting, two general meetings in Derby and one local meeting for Derbyshire practitioners to discuss their own problems within the county. Meetings at Edinburgh and finally at Scarborough during the N.V.M.A. Congress complete the list but unfortunately no minutes have survived. At the Congress the Society's President, Donald Campbell, was elected as President-Elect for 1936/37 which was a considerable personal compliment and a boost for the Society.

The N.V.M.A. elected Robert Simpson, C.V.O, of Cumberland, as President 1936/37. During the congress a round-table conference was held between the National and the Society of Veterinary Officers, at which Donald Campbell and Harry Steel-Bodger were present, In an effort to allay the whole-time officers suspicions, which were still persisting, of the objects and intensions of the practising arm of the profession. The outcome of the conference was that any matter of controversy should be referred to a tribunal consisting of the President N.V.M.A, one member of the S.V.P. and one member of the Society of Veterinary Officers; the S.V.P, elected Harry Steele-Bodger to serve at a meeting held subsequently in January 1937-

The year 1937, which was to be a momentous one, started with a meeting on January 7th in London. Alas no minutes but it was at that this meeting that Barry Steele-Bodger was elected to serve on the three-man tribunal mentioned above.

Oft April 5th the Society made history by beinf the first society of any kind to hold a meeting in the N.V.M.A's newly acquired offices at 36,Gordon Square when it held the 1936 AGM there, preceded by a council meeting. The AGM due in September 1936 had been dodged by ill-health; A.B Mattinson of Bamber Bridge had agreed to relieve Harry Steele-Bodger of the Honorary Secretaryship but the illness of his wife rendered this impossible at the time, and the serious and long continued illness of E. P.Edwards in Ruthin had made it impossible for a balance sheet to be prepared, all the necessary papers being stored in his home at Bournemouth. To cap it all Harry Steele-Bodger's secretary was away ill, and changes in the personnel of his staff had compelled him to give more time to his own practice. The postponement grew from week to week and month to month until April 1937, by which time Harry Steele-Bodger's tenure of office had grown from one to two and a half very strenuous years.

In his Presidential address Donald Campbell was able to report that "many eminent whole-time officers have been more than willing to meet us half-way to discuss outstanding difficulties and try and conduct, with us, the affairs of the profession so that we might, if possible, attain unanimity where for a tine unanimity is threatened." He could say with assurance that there was more unity and disposition to get together and discuss frankly the difficulties facing the profession.

The Hon.Secretary in his report explained the delay in calling the meeting and then went on to describe the response to the NVMA's Questionnaire, and said that on the Free Services Committee considering the replies the number of practitioners equalled the total representation from the rest of the profession. The Committee's work was not yet over but he hoped and believed that its recommendations to the Council of the NVMA would have far-reaching effects on the future of the profession.

The Society's meetings held early in 1936 to consider the Questionnaire had covered a very wide field of great diversity and many matters arising had subsequently received the consideration of the Free Services Committee. These included "Tuberculin testing; the administration of the work of investigation officers under the new rules; such problems as arise under the proposed panel system of the NVMA Scheme as they affect part-time inspectors and practitioners as a whole the question as to whether areas of inspectorships should be upon a geographical basis or whether complete freedom should be accorded to the agriculturists to employ any qualified practitioner, whose certificates would be accepted by the County Councils) the administration of the Accredited Herds Schemes. Speaking broadly, it appeared that ,embers were agreed that if the NVMA Scheme was adopted and a Ministry of Animal Health formed, there would be a basis upon which to found such solutions of these problems as should be equitable to all, and in the best interests of agriculture and the profession as a whole."

The Society's resolution to the NVMA passed on February 17th suggesting that letters be sent to the CVOs of each county expressing the willing-ness of practitioners to co-operate with and work in harmony with whole-time officers had been adopted by the NVMA Council in April, with the minor reservation to omit any councils who had employed officers who had accepted appointments banned by the NVMA. This 'olive branch' had been received "by some whole-time officers with suspicion and regarded as having some sinister interpretations; as a result the round-table conference at the Scarborough Congress, already mentioned, was held. In reporting

on the relationships of the profession with the establishment and outside bodies such as the RSPCA, the Milk Marketing Board and the Royal Veterinary College he mentioned that members of the Society had been included on every committee or sub-committee appointed by the "National" and in every deputation. He was happy to say that "on all deputations and conferences other than those to the Ministry of Health we felt we were receiving a sympathetic hearing."

The meeting elected Professor Sir Frederick Hobday, CMG, FRCVS, FRSE as President in succession to Donald Campbell. E.P. Edwards continued in office as Hon. Treasurer and A.B. Mattinson was confirmed as Hon. Secretary. An imposing list of Vice-Presidents was proposed and elected :- Donald Campbell and O.V. Gunning, Past-Presidents; Messrs D. Brown of Milwinning (Ayrshire), H.W. Dawes of West Bromwich, George Elmes of St. Albans, Dr James McCunn of the RVC, H.W. Hall Masheter of Newnham-on-Severn, Professor W.M. Mitchell of the R(Dick)VC; J.O. Powley, M. of A Superintending Inspector H.W. Steele-Bodger, A.H. Watson of Bradford and T. Wilkinson of Lanchester (Co. Durham).

Amongst the fifteen members elected as representatives to the Council NVMA it is interesting to note the name of Professor W.C. Miller, currently in charge of Animal Husbandry at the RVC. In the early years the Society welcomed to membership all who were in sympathy with the aims of the Society; academic life and research were represented by Professor James McCunn, Emeritus Professor Dr J. Share Jones, Professor W.M. Mitchell, Dr J. Russell Greig, Professor W.C. Miller, Sir Frederick Hobday, Dr Tom Hare, and Professors Wm. Robb and G.W. Weir of Glasgow. In addition to J.O. Powley, mentioned above, whole-time officers were represented by W.P. Blount from the East Sussex County Council. H.T. Matthews, CVO of the City of Liverpool in succession to Noel Pillars, was a very active collaborator although not identifiable as a member; he later became 'our mole in the Ministry.' It was at this meeting that the author was first elected to serve on Council NVMA at the tender age of twenty-five.

On vacating office Harry Steele-Bodger announced that the membership stood at 442, and he forecast a considerable increase under the new officers.

### **The Final Struggle for Professional Cohesion and the Dawn of Reason.**

The Gowland Hopkins report had been issued in May 1934 and exactly three years later the Minister of Agriculture, Mr W.S. Morrison, made a statement in the Commons on May 27th 1937 on the long term policy for the eradication of disease in cattle. The editorial in the Veterinary Record of June 5th whilst giving a cautious welcome to the policy expressed the hope that the scheme adopted by the Council NVMA in January 1935. which had put forward frequently on deputations to the Ministry and other influential bodies, would exercise a considerable influence on whatever scheme the Government finally drafted; it concluded expressing the hope that the opportunity would not "in some cruel way be missed or abused in its execution."

In the same issue there was 'one straw in the wind', the Amended Scheme for Attested Herds (England and Wales) 1937. This scheme allowed farmers to employ their own veterinary practitioner for the preliminary qualifying tests and provided financial aid toward the veterinary fees. It also provided for the post-Attestation renewal tests to be carried out by veterinary practitioners nominated by the Ministry. These official tests were to be at the expense of the Ministry, with mileage allowance and the issue of free tuberculin. This brought England and Wales into line with the scheme operating in Scotland.

The fee scale was:

1 to 20 cattle at 4s. per head, with a minimum fee of £1.11.6.

Additional cattle from 20-40 at 3s. per head, above 40 at 2s. per head.

Mileage at Treasury rates, tuberculin supplied.

This scale survived unchanged certainly until well after the 1939-45 War.

This concession to the general practitioner may have indicated a gentle 'wind of change' beginning to stir obdurate official minds.

The fee scale, although slightly lower than was at one time suggested, was considered acceptable as the Ministry no longer required the caudal fold test to be carried out simultaneously with the intradermal test. Further it was a stabilising factor where private fees were concerned; hitherto fees charged to farmers had varied enormously throughout the country, much to the irritation of the farming community who in consequence had welcomed free or semi-free services from county veterinary officers wherever available. The variation was from 1s. per head in S.W.Scotland where 'cut-throat' competition between practitioners prevailed, to 5s. per head in S.England, with intermediate charges elsewhere.

At the NVMA Council meeting on June 8th at the R(D)VC the Association's Committee of Investigation appointed on October 1st 1935 presented its report. The Committee of thirteen members, representative of all branches of the profession, was under the chairmanship of Dr W.R.Wooldridge. The Committee had considered the replies to the questionnaire sent out in February 1936; a total of 2366 copies had been circulated to MsRCVS resident in England, Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland. No replies were received from N.Ireland, but 284 replies from various branches of the profession on the mainland reached the Committee; 12% was considered a fair response comprising 253 replies from practitioners and 31 from whole-time officers. The report was extensive and comprehensive occupying 21 pages in the Veterinary Record and was composed of three parts.

Part 1 recorded, analysed and commented upon the causes of friction arising from recent legislation and other developments; Part 2 reviewed the current organisation of the country's veterinary services showing approximately 1800 in general practice (excluding N.Ireland), 102 whole-time officers in the MAF and 133 employed by local authorities. It is interesting to note that the MAF employed 291 local veterinary inspectors on a fee for the job basis, and that 200 GPs held part-time inspectorships with local authorities; thus although the growth of local authority VT staffs threatened the latter group it will be clear that the MAF also were already accustomed to the assistance of LVIs when necessary. Part 3 summarised the Committee's review and updated the NVMA's detailed recommendations for the establishment of a State Service with provisions for the employment of general practitioners as an essential part thereof. The Council adopted the report unanimously.

The Agriculture Bill 1937 was published on July 3rd and a week later the Editorial in the Veterinary Record was able to report "that in broad outline the Government's intention follows closely the scheme put forward by the NVMA", and that "—diseases of cattle — and a policy for their eradication is recognised as fundamentally an agricultural and not a public health measure." The latter statement marked a big step forward in the working of the official mind of the Establishment. Part 4 of the Act contained the sections relevant to the eradication and control of diseases of animals, and apart from details concerning the eradication of bovine tuberculosis Section 20(1) gave the Minister general powers to expend money for the eradication of diseases of animals. It was undoubtedly from this open-ended power that the latter-day eradication schemes for swine fever and brucellosis stemmed.

As the Agriculture Bill was debated in Parliament the Record was able successively to report the Government's intention "to transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture the majority of the veterinary officers in the public services"; and that the Minister stated "some apprehensions have been expressed ..... that in some way part-time practising veterinary surgeons will have their living interfered with, but there is no ground at all for that fear." Also that the cost of the proposed centralisation of veterinary services under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture and the large-scale eradication schemes was estimated to increase the cost of the State Veterinary Service to £450,000; the local rates however being relieved to the extent of £170,000 per annum.

The NVMA Congress was held at Bournemouth in the week July 25th/30th, and at the AGM Donald Campbell was elected President. The Minister had suggested that the Association appoint a small advisory committee to co-operate and consult with the Ministry in discussion of all matters arising under Part IV. of the Agriculture Act.

At the Congress Banquet the Minister, Mr W.S.Morrison, was reported as saying "Mine is no desire to magnify a State service at his (the general practitioner's) expense." The NVMA had previously been assured by the Minister that at the outset a large number of part-time officers would be required, and that where employment of such officers proved to "be best and most economical the Ministry would continue to use it.

### **Presentation to Mr & Mrs M.W.Steele-Bodger.**

On July 28th during Congress Sir Frederick Hobday presided over a meeting of the Society for the purpose of making a presentation to Harry Steele-Bodger in recognition of his services to the Society as Honorary Secretary. He was supported by Robert Simpson, President of the NVMA, who in a short address paid the following tribute to Mr Steele-Bodger, "I have known Mr Steele-Bodger for a good many years, now and I am fully conscious of the great work he has done for the profession. He has been enthusiastic and he has spared no trouble in carrying out work which has been really for the good of the profession as a whole. I know something of his work on the "National." I know of the great enthusiasm which he gives to the work of its various committees and I am sure that that work is deserving of the fullest appreciation and recognition by the profession, I am delighted to think, sir, that his work has been recognised by the presentation which you are about to make. I am very grateful indeed for your permission to be associated with this little function and I congratulate Mr Steele-Bodger most heartily on the recognition which is being extended to him for the work he has done so well for the profession."

Sir Frederick in making the presentation of a Georgian tea set and tray concluded by saying "I may say it carries with it the greatest affection of your brother members and the wish, too, that Mrs Steele-Bodger and yourself may have long life and good health to enjoy its use."

Harry Steele-Bodger's reply, as published In the Veterinary Record, was as follows:- "For once I am at a loss for words. I do thank you, on behalf of my wife and myself, very, very sincerely for this handsome present. I may as well confess that you are making this presentation to the wrong person. I have no qualms about that, but I am the person to know. Sir Frederick has referred to the care I have extended to and lavished on this Society. He has said I was responsible for the growth of this Society to its present maturity. I am not. Mr Edwards Is the man to whom you owe everything. Anything that I have done has only been made possible through the work, the intense work, of the Honorary Treasurer. Your Honorary Treasurer has honestly been a most able Assistant Honorary Secretary. I have come and I have gone. Major Hattinson has taken my place. He may stay and he may go, but if Mr Edwards leaves Heaven help the Society» Major Hattinson would not carry on the Honorary Secretaryship without Mr Edwards' help. Any time when I felt fed up with it he has been there to rally me and at any time I wanted advice or assistance he has been there to offer and to give it to me. He has recently recovered from a serious illness, It Is my candid opinion that this Society is responsible for that illness, it was overwork on your behalf. In thanking you for this presentation I mist tell you that there is the gentleman to whom you should have presented it (pointing to Mr Edwards). He will not admit it and I must thank you for the gift. Please give to my successor even more support than you gave to me. Necessarily, in my view, this Society will continue to grow. It must always be guided by a few for owing to geographical considerations it is impossible to call meetings at short notice. You must have people in whom you have confidence to guide you. You have at the present in your President and Honorary Secretary gentlemen of integrity who will guide this Society. You have had in each of your Presidents gentlemen who have guided this Society successfully, but it is essential that you should have abundant confidence in those officers. I know that I have been criticised by members of the Society and by veterinary surgeons outside the Society, in that I have expressed my own views and not the views of the Society. I think I have had my finger on the political pulse of the profession and I have tried to do my best for the profession. I have been called over-optimistic but I believe, gentlemen, that my optimisi Is going to be justified very soon. I have no qualms as to the future of veterinary practice. I think we are about to

embark on the best time the veterinary practitioner has ever known and, If I have been permitted, through this Society, to play any part in bringing that about, then I am amply rewarded without this.

"I thank you, Mr President, for your kind remarks and you, gentlemen, for the way in which you have received them, and also for this very handsome gift which I know will be appreciated by my wife as well as myself. This Georgian tea service was made in Edinburgh in 1805, and that is an additional attraction to my wife. She has reviled me as she has reviled you, but It has all been superficial. At the bottom she has been what all good wives must be, an absolute helpmate and a good adviser. (Applause). I thank you very much on behalf of my wife and myself. (Applause)."

By August 21st the Record was able to report that "...the Minister himself requested that a small advisory committee of the NVMA shall work in close co-operation with the Ministry during the period of development of the

Government plans....". And it understood that "... above all the committee is one of consultation and co-operation , and may be regarded with much satisfaction by exponents of the Association's general aim to secure results through co-operation wherever possible."

In considering subsequent events during the autumn and early winter of 1937/38, the Minister's desire for "close co-operation" and the concept of the committee as "one of consultation" should be remembered; but more anon.

By the end of August the Record was assessing the prospects ahead of local authority veterinary officers, hoping that their transfer to the State service would take place smoothly and without hardship; advising any who did suffer hardship as a result of the reorganisation to enlist the aid of the 'National' In seeking redress. It was also noted that they were disappointed that the prospects for veterinary officers in the public health fields of meat inspection and milk production were "bleak, as there were no plans to include these services within the new State organisation" However the editorial ended quoting the Minister's hopeful expectation that the veterinary officer would fit "into the machine where he can work with credit to the whole enterprise and with great happiness to himself" and the hope of the NVMA that this desirable end would be achieved.

The role of the general practitioner in the new service was under review in mid-September when the Record noted that Government's intention "to use the services of the veterinary practitioner" and "we are glad to say, has decided in favour of the views expressed by the NVMA and the practitioner is to be accorded his due place in the centralised service."

Recalling the Minister's recent Banquet statement: "Mine is no desire to magnify a State service at his (the general practitioner's) expense" it continued "It would seem to follow from this statement that the Government's decision is a permanent one, provided the service is carried out efficiently." This optimism it might be considered premature in the light of subsequent events.

The SVP's activities after the Bournemouth Congress were confined to two Council meetings the first on September 24th prior to the Annual General Meeting on 25th, and a further Council meeting on December 12th. Once again no minutes of these meetings have survived but the Officers were re-elected at the AGM, Sir Frederick Hobday as President supported by E.P.Edwards as Hon.Treasurer and A.B.Mattinson as Hon. Secretary. The December 12th meeting of Council would have received an up-to-date report from its active NVMA representatives, such as Harry Steele-Bodger, concerning the problems arising during the NVMA's endeavours to negotiate with the Ministry during the autumn.

## The Months of Negotiation.

The Special Consultative Committee was duly formed under the chairmanship of the Association's President, Donald Campbell (SVP member), the other members being:

J.R.Rider, Honorary Secretary NVMA,  
J.R.Barker of Hereford, Past-President NVHA (1935/36),  
H.Simpson, CVO of Cumberland; Past-President NVMA (1936/37),  
V.J.Brennan DeVine, CVO City of Birmingham,  
J.G.McGregor, County VO, Stirling,  
D.S.Rabagliati, CVO West Riding of Yorkshire,  
H.W.Steele-Bodger, (SVP member),  
Dr W.R.Vooldridge, London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
In December prior to employment in the new service D.S.Rabagliati and R,Simpson left the committee and the following new members were co-opted,;-  
H.W.Dawes of West Bromwich, (SVP member).  
S.G.Abbott, Chief Veterinary Inspector, Glasgow,  
H.T.Matthews, CVO City of Liverpool.

When the proposals for the new centralised service were published in June the N.V.M.A. had greatly deplored the omission of neat inspection and milk hygiene from the duties allocated to the service, a feeling shared "by many local authority whole-time officers already dealing with these important aspects of food production. During the Committee stage of the Bill the N.V.M.A. made strenuous efforts to move amendments on several aspects to ensure:-

1. That the head of the augmented Service should be a veterinary surgeon having direct access to the Minister.
  2. For payment of compensation for loss of office.
  3. That the term "veterinary officer" be substituted for "veterinary inspector".
- Parliamentary approval for none of these amendments was forthcoming, nor from the Minister in a subsequent interview.

The Committee's main concern during the early autumn was the Conditions of service, salary scales and the transfer of local authority veterinary officers to the service.

The Ministry made the first move in October presenting the Committee with "an approved" scale:-

|                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chief Veterinary officer        | £1,450-£100-£1,650.     |
| Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer | £1,200-£50- £1,400.     |
| Chief Veterinary Inspector      | £1,000- £30-£1,200.     |
| Superintending Inspector        | £850- £30- £1,000.      |
| Divisional Inspector            | £700- £25- £850.        |
| Inspector                       | £400-£18-£508-£25-£700. |

The Committee considered the scales to be quite inadequate, especially in view of the great extension of duties and responsibilities involved in the enlarged service contemplated. It was keenly disappointed that the Association had been denied the opportunity to make representations before the scale was finally approved, and despite this apparent finality it decided to press for the adoption of a revised scale:-

|                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chief Veterinary Officer        | A fixed salary of £2,000. |
| Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer | £1,500-£1,750.            |
| Chief Veterinary Inspector,     | £1,250-£1,500.            |
| Superintending Inspector        | £1,000-£1, 250.           |
| Divisional Inspector            | £800-£1,000.              |
| Inspector                       | £450- £750.               |

In November 1936, in ignorance of any impending changes in the Ministry's service, such as the enlarged service envisaged in the 1937 Agriculture Act the N.V.M.A, had put forward to the Ministry proposals for improving the salaries of the existing whole-time staff; these were inevitably lower than the scale detailed above which reflected the Association's view that the great extension of the veterinary service created special circumstances justifying special Measures. It contended that the C.V.O's salary should indicate clearly that his appointment was the premier post open to the veterinary profession in the country, and that the salaries of the Divisional Inspectors and senior grades was not commensurate with the added duties and responsibilities they would have to accept. The Ministry's proposal to recruit junior staff after only one year's experience in practice after qualification was considered premature, the Association's view being that three years was desirable. The Association's efforts were supported by resolutions from the Society of Veterinary Officers and the Scottish Society of Veterinary Inspectors, although the latter Society did agree to accept the proposed scale under protest whilst encouraging the N.V.M.A. in its efforts to obtain an improvement.

Two meetings were held with the Ministry when the deputation stressed the need to attract the very best type of recruit, emphasising that the salaries offered compared unfavourably with those open to medical officers in the State service, the more so in the case of future graduates who would need six years to qualify complete with a D.V.S.M. In addition it was requested that, at the outset, existing part-time inspectors of the Ministry and local authorities together with practitioners in general be eligible to apply to join the new service at a higher initial salary, to be negotiated, in order to introduce a cadre of experienced men.

At the conclusion of these interviews it was left that the Association's representations would be laid before the Minister.

A letter received on November 6th stated that the Minister, whilst regretting the misunderstanding that had arisen between the Ministry and the Association as to consultation between the parties over the question of salaries, was not prepared to reopen the matter which had been settled by the Departmental Whitley Council. He considered the scales both appropriate and adequate in all respects. However he "looked forward to consulting with the Association's committee on many questions arising out of the proposals of Part IV of the one Agriculture Act and obtaining their advice and help." The minor concession made was on the question of recruitment of junior officers: whilst not prepared to raise the period of post-graduate experience required from one to three years he would see that the Association's views were conveyed to the Selection Board and was prepared to raise the minimum age for entry to the Service from 21 as hitherto to 23. As the Five Year course had recently been introduced the number of graduates qualifying and then acquiring the one year's experience or a D.V.S.M. under the age of 23 was likely to be nil; to use the slang of the 1980's this was "no big deal".

The Committee met again on Nov,10th to consider this last letter, and suffered a further rebuff when an urgent attempt to arrange a personal interview that day with the Minister was rejected. The only consolation was that the Ministry representatives were now empowered to negotiate Part IV proposals such as fees, panels of practitioners etc., but all arrangements regarding Ministry staff would be considered internal matters pure and simple.

Consequently the Committee reluctantly decided in the interests of the community to co-operate as far as possible with the Ministry. A dignified re-ply was drafted in which the Association recorded its considered opinion that Mr Morrison's decision was an unfortunate one, but recognising a wider sense of responsibility and public duty it accepted the scale, taking note of "the assurance that it will be fully consulted on the matters pertaining to the organisation of the Service before final decisions are taken."

A further meeting: followed on Nov.29th by which time storm clouds were gathering. Amongst the matters to be considered were five documents from the Ministry which had been used at meetings between the Ministry and representatives of local authorities and a draft letter from the Ministry to local authorities concerning the transfer of whole-time staffs, in particular conditions to be applied to the veterinary officers of borough councils and municipal corporations.

In addition a record of a meeting of the Society of Veterinary Officers and Ministry officials on the same subject, which had given rise to fears that the Ministry was reluctant to "honour its moral obligations towards veterinary officers of local authorities" contrary to "clear assurances given in the House of Commons that ALL local authority veterinary officers would be invited to join the Ministry's service." The Society at a subsequent general meeting had passed a resolution calling the N.V.M.A's attention to these fears and offering support for any action the Association thought fit to take.

The Committee decided at a deputation later that day that ALL local authority veterinary officers, whether employed by county councils, borough councils or municipal corporations should be invited to join as it considered that the Ministry had a moral obligation to do so under the terms of the statement made by Mr Ramsbotham in the House of Commons (vide page 984 of Hansard of July 12th 1937.). A further attempt would also be made to persuade the Ministry to bring meat inspection and dairy and farm "buildings hygiene within the scope of Part IV of the Act by way of Amendment. The results of this deputation were somewhat inconclusive, the Ministry being unable to accept the Association's interpretation of its moral obligations to municipal veterinary officers but conceding that they would be on the same footing as officers employed by county councils as far as the election Board was concerned. Some amendment of the proposed draft of the circular to local authorities was agreed.

A further meeting was held on Dec.9th to consider letters from Mr Toye, Establishment Officer of the Ministry, on points previously raised by the President concerning the transfer of pensions, the retirement age and the proposed medical examination of applicants. Consideration was given to a letter from the Society of Veterinary Officers taking strong exception to the failure of the Ministry to omit from its letter to local authorities, as promised, the statement that "the Ministry therefore can accept no obligation to offer an appointment, whether as superintending inspector, divisional inspector or inspector, to any officer of a "borough local authority." The Committee decision is reported in the Record:-

"In view of this breach of faith, the publication in the 'Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture' of information which the committee had been asked to regard as confidential, and difficulties previously met with in negotiating with the Ministry's representatives, it was unanimously decided :-

- (1) To request an interview with the Minister of Agriculture.
- (2) To publish in the next issue of the Veterinary Record a note giving the reasons which had forced the committee to take this step.
- (3) To follow this up with an editorial article based on a memorandum received from the Society of Veterinary Officers.
- (4) That in the event of the Minister declining to receive a deputation, a Special Meeting of the Council be called."

The President in his letter to the Minister requesting him to receive a deputation as a matter of urgency, on either 15th or 16th of the month, emphasised the disquiet prevailing among all sections of the profession where the view was widely held that the Committee had on each occasion of meeting the Ministry's representatives been presented with a "fait accompli." The Minister's Private Secretary replied on Dec.10th and 15th; in the first instance the Minister was absent in his constituency and the following letter requested core precise indications of the matters of extreme urgency and vital importance to the profession which the President had mentioned.

The Association's views at this stage are made clear by the editorial on page 1575 of the Veterinary Record for Dec.11th. :-

'The Consultative Committee is seriously perturbed at the rebuffs which it repeatedly receives from the Ministry. Following upon the failure of the Ministry to meet the wishes of the profession in such matters as the status of the Chief Veterinary Officer, the use of the term "Officer" instead of "Inspector; the question of salaries and the desirability of insisting on a minimum of three

years practice in the profession, differences have arisen raising the question of confidence and of good faith."

Further fuel was added to the fire of the Association's indignation on Dec.12th by the publication in the 'Farmers' Weekly of information which the Consultative Committee had been asked to regard as confidential:-

"The Ministry of Agriculture have decided to defer the introduction of the State Veterinary Service, for which provision is made in the Agriculture Act, until April 1st, 1938\* It had been provisionally arranged for the Service to come into operation on January 1st. The Service will play an important part in the Government's great anti-disease campaign.

"Britain is to be divided into 78 divisions, each in charge of a divisional inspector, and the divisions will be grouped into areas, each in charge of a superintending inspector.

"Laboratory facilities will be provided in each division for the examination of milk samples under the Milk and Dairies Order, and it is expected that provision will also be made for area laboratory facilities,

"The Ministry have been in communication with county and borough authorities on the staffing of the Service, which will at first employ between 300 and 350 permanent whole-time officers.

"In order to carry out the whole of the duties contemplated under the Agriculture Act, a staff of 500 will be needed. It is proposed that the staff will be assisted by panels of part-time veterinary surgeons, which will be reduced as the permanent staff is increased."

In an ensuing editorial the Record strongly condemned the way in which details of the reorganisation of the service were filtering through to the profession from non-professional sources whilst the Consultative Committee was bound secrecy. An early special meeting of Council was urged to endeavour to arrest the loss of goodwill by the profession. On Dec.15th the President replied to the Minister's request for more specific information on the matters of urgency which the Association wished to see him about personally. He stressed in particular that "every representation made to the Ministry by the Special Committee has been met by what has appeared to be a decision, already and finally taken." In addition to the problems of transfer of whole-time officers referred to above, i.e. salaries, pensions, and the employment of borough council officers, the Association was not satisfied with the intended procedure for the employment of veterinary practitioners under the Scheme.

The Private Secretary replied on 17th in the Minister's absence "in the country," and again on Dec.22nd indicating that the Minister was brushing aside the Association's assertions and did "not feel that any useful purpose could be served by his receiving a further deputation," with the request that the correspondence be published in the Veterinary Record.

Next day, Dec.23rd, an emergency meeting of Council was held at which the correspondence with the Minister was read, and a report of the Consultative Committee meetings from Oct.15th to date was presented. Following detailed discussion Council adjourned for half an hour to allow the Special Committee to draft a reply to the Minister. The draft was read to Council by Dr Tom Hare on behalf of the Committee and after further discussion it was agreed that it be submitted to the Association's Solicitor for final drafting in consultation with the President. Council also agreed to the Minister's request that the correspondence be published in the Record, and empowered the Editorial Committee to amplify the Consultative Committee's report for the purposes of publication by quoting from other documents if it so wished.

The Consultative Committee met on Dec.23rd both before and after the emergency Council meeting. At the earlier session the Chairman of the Editorial Committee submitted an editorial which it was proposed to insert in the Dec.25th issue of the Record; certain modifications were suggested and were accepted by the Chairman, whereupon it was agreed to go ahead with publication.

## **"Disillusion."**

"The recent Agriculture Act contains the seeds of a veterinary service whose eventual growth cannot as yet be clearly envisaged. The premier stock-breeding country of the world is at last preparing for a concerted effort to combat disease among its animals and enhance the value of a great national asset. The importance of the project to us and to agriculture is paralleled by that of the National Health Insurance Acts to the medical profession and to the wage-earning classes. We cannot contemplate with equanimity anything less than a truly auspicious beginning having the good wishes of everyone concerned.

To plan and guide the launching of such an endeavour requires rare attributes. Vision, creative power, understanding, an attitude of friendly co-operation, a willingness to give and accept help and to discuss and even adopt constructive suggestions put forward by others are among the essentials to success. Unfortunately, the counsel of the profession has not truly been sought, its consultative committee has been presented with defined schemes in which it has been expected to acquiesce almost at once. A policy of secrecy, a spirit suggestive of dictatorship and an apparent assumption of omniscience have prevailed, Secrecy has created fear and rumour, no display of outstanding competence has justified dictatorial methods, and the claim to omniscience has not been sanctioned by events. The goodwill of the profession has been shocked and dissipated, for on no material point have its wishes been met. Its county men are to be absorbed by the State smarting under petty injustices, the municipal officer is to be left in large measure to work a broken system of duties concerning public health, while the practitioner is expected to welcome temporary inclusion within the service. Such intentions are widely different from those which the profession had been led to expect and have not unnaturally annihilated its confidence.

Under these circumstances postponement of the appointed day would seem inevitable until such time as it is assured that the profession, which has to work the scheme, is truly organised on national lines and not in a way which takes one section into bondage and offers another an existence denuded of its vital interests in agriculture.

This scheme, as disclosed up to the present, is a travesty of all that is meant "by a co-ordinated attack upon the diseases of livestock and has little, if any, hope of success."

Thus spake the N.V.M.A. on Christmas Day 1937.

The foregoing editorial accurately sums up the attitude of the profession. It clearly points to a situation of deadlock as the year drew to its close. The serious student of these troubled times will find the issues of the Veterinary Record for the six months October 1937/March 1938 essential, and fascinating!

## **"To Be, or Not to Be??"**

The President's New Year Message published in the Record of January 1st. 1938 outlining the problems and frustrations of the previous three months and affirming the N.V.M.A.'s determination to work for an acceptable solution announced the Consultative Committee's intention to publish as fully as possible every future development. And whilst admitting that "This year opens in crisis", he expressed the hope and belief that "the exercise of resource, patience, tenacity and courage directed by wisdom" would eventually produce the Happy New Year which he and his wife wished for the profession.

The same issue contained the report of the Consultative Committee to Council on December 23rd 1937 covering the period from early October to date, together with the correspondence between the President and the Minister in all 8 ½ pages, and an editorial underlining a particular bone of contention. This matter went to the heart of the transfer of whole-time officers from the local authorities to the new Service. The N.V.M.A. had always understood that the Minister would invite all such whole-time officers to join, and in fact had a moral obligation to do so under the terms of the statement made by Mr Ramsbotham in the House of Commons {p.984 of Hansard

12.7.37.) :- "The Government have already announced that they intend to invite all whole-time veterinary officers of local authorities to accept appointments under the Ministry subject to the conditions which will ordinarily attach to the State Veterinary Service. In other words they will become Civil Servants. That is borne out by Clause 25 sub-section (2), dealing with their superannuation rights. It is explicit and implicit in the Bill it is the Government's declared intention to invite all whole-time officers to accept appointments under the Ministry" Further Mr Morrisson was reported in the same debate :-

"Where a full-time officer is now operating under the orders of a local authority he will continue to operate under the Ministry."

The Ministry's draft letter to local authorities however had stated "The Ministry, therefore, can accept no obligation to offer an appointment, whether as Superintending Inspector, Divisional Inspector or Inspector, to any officer of a borough local authority". At a meeting on November 29th the Association took strong exception to this sentence, and the Ministry's representatives agreed to delete it. The revised letter issued without further consultation with the Association however read- "There is therefore no obligation on the part of the Ministry to offer appointments to the whole of the veterinary staff of the borough councils."

The Society of Veterinary Officers and the N.V.M.A. regarded this as a breach of faith, which together with other difficulties encountered in the negotiations and the leaking of confidential matters to the "Farmers' Weekly" on December 12th had decided Council on December 23rd to authorise a further request to the Minister for a personal interview. The letter, approved by the Association's solicitor, also set out four basic principles which the Association deemed essential to the successful launching of the new Service:-

- 1). The permanent inclusion of private practitioners in the Service,
- 2). Freedom of choice by the stockowner of the practitioner to be employed.
- 3). An invitation to all existing whole-time veterinary officers employed by local authorities to accept appointment in the Service.
- 4). An Arbitration Board to deal with any question arising between the Ministry and veterinary officers employed.

The Consultative Committee met again on January 4th and decided to invite Donald Vandeeper or another representative of the Ministry to attend a Special Meeting of Council and give an address on the Ministry's proposals.

On the following day the President called on Mr Vandeeper and the Chief Veterinary Officer and issued the invitation. Vandeeper emphatically declined the proposal describing some of the recent articles in the Record as scurrilous and without their experience of negotiation. Further, acceptance would not accord with the dignity of the Ministry. (!!). Both Mr Vandeeper and Sir John Melland appeared to resent the Association's approach to the Minister, calling it "going over their heads" and indicating that the Association had no desire to negotiate further with them; also pointing out that the appeal to the Minister automatically stopped negotiations pending his reply.

On January 10th the President sent a letter to Mr Vandeeper requesting that the Association be supplied with a comprehensive statement of the scheme as a whole, as hitherto the Ministry's proposals had had to be dealt with piecemeal.

The Minister in his reply, dated January 12th, to the further request for a personal interview brushed aside the basic principles desired by the Association and indicated quite clearly that he saw no useful purpose in granting a further interview; he concluded with the suggestion that if the Association wished to discuss detailed proposals which were being formulated that it should utilise the method of discussion between the Consultative Committee and the Ministry's representatives.

The Record of January 22nd carried an editorial with the heading "A Specious Plea of Dignity", which reported the Ministry's refusal to meet Council and concluded :- "In the strong belief that expression of view, honestly held, is in the public interest, we cannot admit such censure and censorship as are implied in the refusal. Nor can we sympathise with so delicate a departmental dignity. The Council hazarded its own dignity in risking a friendly gesture and suffered a rebuff. The implied attitude that judgment, honesty of purpose and dignity, are a bureaucratic monopoly, is not one to which we can subscribe nor allow to pass unchallenged."

By this time the Minister and his advisers must of necessity have become perplexed as to how to deal with these troublesome people. Parliament had decreed that a State Veterinary Service was to be established, and the Minister was under an obligation to set it up; already the 'appointed day' had been changed from January 1st. to April 1st, (All Fools' Day,), and the role of part-time officers had barely been touched upon in the negotiations to date. There were many loose ends concerning the transfer of the local authority officers yet to be resolved. It must have seemed imperative that the co-operation and goodwill of the profession be regained, as without it the Scheme must founder.

Further, the farming community's expectations for the early introduction of free tuberculin testing and herd inspection could not be deferred indefinitely if the Ministry's prestige and reputation was to be sustained.

### **"The Olive Branch"**

Meanwhile within the Ministry the matter seems to have at last been taken seriously. Donald Vandepier took the President's letter of January 10th requesting a comprehensive statement of the Ministry's proposals to Sir Donald Fergusson, the Permanent Secretary. Sir Donald undertook to reply to the President and in a letter sent by his Private Secretary, dated January 17th, he issued an invitation to the President and a few of his leading colleagues to call on him as soon as possible, before discussions were resumed between the Consultative committee and the Ministry.

On January 29th the editorial in the Record was headed "The Agriculture Act - Consultation Resumed.", and was able to report the meeting between Sir Donald and the Association's representatives at which it was agreed "that no reference to matters arising from meetings between the Ministry and the committee shall be made in the journal unless such statements are agreed "by both participants in the consultation." This decision had been taken to facilitate the discussion of the Ministerial plans for utilising the services of practitioners, while these were still in the formative stage and it would be possible to take account of the Association's view whilst modification was still possible.

### **Reason and Progress.**

The meeting "between Sir Donald Fergusson and the Association's representatives took place on January 20th and was fully reported to a Special Meeting of Council on March 2nd, together with a full report of subsequent developments.

In the course of a frank discussion Sir Donald emphasised the necessity of the Association regarding as confidential all documents outlining the Ministry's proposals and statements made "by its representatives at meetings with the Consultative Committee; and was at pains to endeavour to remove any misconceptions as to what was possible and what was not possible in these negotiations. A subsequent meeting was necessary before the Association's representatives finally agreed to resume discussions, accepting the need for confidentiality, after being informed that the Ministry had proposals for the employment of part-time officers which they wished to discuss whilst they were in the formative stage; and further receiving assurances that details of the Ministry's scheme as a whole would be placed before the Committee and that decisions would only be taken after the Association's views had been fully considered. It was also agreed that decisions arrived at would be released simultaneously to the lay and veterinary press; the Ministry conceding that the Association was free to express its views as freely and forcibly as it wished after publication.

On this basis the consultations were resumed forthwith with meeting, held on January 26th and 27th, and February 3rd. Undoubtedly the Ministry had done a great deal of preliminary spadework and in the improved atmosphere prevailing prepress was rapid, and by February 5th the Record was able to report modest concessions to transferred officers. These were a nominal certification fee in lieu of £8 normally required by the Civil Service rules from those entering the Service, and exemption wherever possible from medical examination and where an examination was required a reduction in the medical fee.

The first agreed outline for the employment of part-time officers appeared in the Record on February 19th, Certain duties such as diagnostic enquiries into suspected outbreaks of notifiable diseases and the routine inspection of dairy herds would be carried out wherever possible by whole-time officers, assisted by part-time officers if necessary.

Two panels of part-time officers were to be set up, a limited one (Panel A.) to carry out duties on a geographical basis concerning notifiable diseases and market inspection; and a wider one (Panel B.) for the eradication duties for which Panel A practitioners would be automatically eligible. The panel B duties would include tuberculin testing of Attested and graded herds and the coincidental clinical examinations, and blood-testing for contagious abortion: these duties would normally be carried out among a practitioner's own clients. The scale of fees approved for the various duties would be published when the necessary Treasury sanction had been obtained.

The fees were published in the Record on March 12th{ the following samples are exclusive of travelling allowances at the current rates, these even allowed for the use of bicycles. There was a maximum of £4.4.0. for ALL services rendered on one day.

- 1). Market inspection, according to size 10/6-£2.2.0.
- 2), Milk and Dairies Orders, Clinical inspection, including microscopic examination and report, up to 25 head £1.1.0.  
Additional animals, per head 0.0.9-
- 3). Tuberculin Test.  
£1.11.6. plus 2s.6d. per animal tested; the fee included the clinical examination of animals tested. The current test was the double intradermal test using only mammalian tuberculin, necessitating three visits over a period of 72 hours. Tuberculin was supplied free.
- 4). Contagious Abortion, (from Attested Herds.).
  - (a). Special visit, up to 20 head £1.1.0.
  - (b). Collection on a testing visit, per head 0.0.9.
- 5). Anthrax.  
Diagnostic inquiry, microscopic examination and report £1.1.0.
- 6). Swine Fever.  
Inclusive fee for 1st and 2nd visits £1.5.0.  
Subsequent visits, each 10.6.
- 7). Sheep Scab;  
Diagnostic enquiry, microscopic examination and individual examination of up to 50 sheep and report £1.1.0.  
Individual examination of remainder, up to 50 sheep 5,0,
- 8). Milk and Dairies Acts and Orders.  
Clinical inspection of herds, including microscopic examination up to 25 animals £1.1.0.  
Additional animals, per head 0.0.6.

Special Meeting of Council. March 2nd.

This Special Meeting (fully reported in the Record of March 25th) was called by the President, Donald Campbell, to receive the report of the Consultative Committee on the negotiations with the Ministry since the meetings with Sir Donald Fergusson at the earliest possible moment prior to the inauguration of the new Service on April 5th, as the next routine quarterly meeting of Council was not due until later in April.

In his introductory summary of the report the President dealt with the four basic principles which Council had insisted on at its December meeting as a prerequisite to reopening negotiations:

1). The permanent inclusion of private practitioners.

The position was that no Ministry could ever give an absolute guarantee of permanence of anything; what one Government set up, the next might knock down, ( a familiar pattern!). However the Ministry assured them that as far as the Panel B eradication duties were concerned "there was no intention that the employment of practitioners would be of a temporary nature". And as the Ministry's intention was to limit its staff to 500-550, the increase in the scope of the work involved as the schemes expanded seemed to him and the Committee as near an assurance of permanence as could possibly be expected.

2). Freedom of choice for stockowners of practitioner.

The Committee had a hard fight on this issue and the negotiations "became strained and difficult. At the outset only one panel had been proposed, and the Ministry Intended to maintain control of notifiable disease investigations and herd inspections by using their own selected inspectors! the deadlock was broken by the suggestion from J.R.Barker of Hereford that there be a second and wider panel for the eradication duties with the stockowner able to nominate his own veterinary surgeon. This the Ministry was able to accept, making the way clear for further progress.

3). Invitation to all existing whole-time officers to join the Service. Assurances were forthcoming that applicants for appointment would be on exactly the same footing whether from county councils or municipalities, and that before any applicant was refused service with the Ministry the Consultative Committee would be consulted.

4). The creation of an Arbitration Board.

An effective system of consultation regarding the employment of veterinary surgeons by the Ministry had been arranged, applying to both whole-time officers and private practitioners. Any problems or difficulties arising would first be considered by the Association and where appropriate taken up with the Ministry. In cases of persistent disagreement, however, the Minister himself would decide.

He finally submitted that as far as was humanly possible the Committee had achieved a fair measure of success in pressing these principles, and concluded by expressing his hope and belief that the Scheme ushered in a new and brighter era for the profession.

Dr W.R.Wooldridge, a member of the Committee, replied to suggestions from Hamilton Kirk that the Committee had failed to gain their point regarding No.s 1, 2, and 4. To emphasise the efforts made by the Committee he enlarged on the meetings with Sir Donald Fergusson, pointing out that the first produced a very frank and very heated discussion lasting over an hour during the second the position was again frankly discussed before the Committee undertook to continue consultations..

At the first meeting of the renewed consultations the President in his opening remarks said at the outset that he could not allow the Committee to proceed unless the Association was given satisfaction on the basic principles. And having amplified the President's summary replies somewhat Dr Wooldridge thought they could agree that the four cardinal points had been very largely met, and that the President and the Committee had done right in reopening consultations with the Ministry.

After further discussion the meeting carried unanimously a vote of confidence in the Consultative Committee proposed by Or Tom Hare and seconded by R.H.H.Over. The President in his closing remarks expressed his appreciation for all the hard work his colleagues had put in in a very hard task, which at times had seemed almost impossible. He also recorded his appreciation of the Ministry's representatives who, despite earlier disagreements, had latterly been undeniably

anxious to appreciate the Association's point of view and go as far as possible towards meeting them.

Mr Steele-Bodger paid a final tribute' to the General Secretary, F.Knight, for his untiring and unstinted work throughout the negotiations.

On March 12th the Record published further details. The field organisation of the Service had been divided into 22 Areas and 78 Divisions to which Superintending and Divisional Inspectors had already been appointed. The remainder of the whole-time officers offered appointments would be transferred on April 1st, the "Appointed Day".

The retirement age of part-time officers, currently 70, would in future be 65(those approaching 70 or over to be allowed a period of grace to make suitable arrangements for the continuation of part-time inspectorship in their practices). The part-time fees, already listed, were published in full.

A week later it was announced that the Diseases of Animals Division of the Ministry would after April 1st be known as the Animal Health Division.

And so on April 1st. the concept "became a reality, a Centralised Veterinary Service was launched with a team of whole-time and part-time veterinarians working in partnership for the ultimate "benefit of British agriculture•

It may well be that future historians will come to regard the formation of the Animal Health Division as the most important development of the veterinary profession in the 20th century; it averted the fragmentation of the profession by giving it a common purpose and a strengthened unity, in keeping with its motto of "Vis Unita Fortior".