

The Citizen

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1924.

ALL BLACKS IN GLOUCESTER.

Mayor and Mayoress Entertain Teams and Officials.

AN INTERESTING AND MEMORABLE FUNCTION.

Following Gloucestershire's match with the New Zealanders on Thursday afternoon, the Mayor and Mayoress of Gloucester (Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Gardner) entertained the teams and officials to dinner at the Guildhall. It was an interesting and memorable function, the attendance including the leading men in New Zealand and English Rugby.

Supporting the Mayor and Mayoress at the top table were the rival captains, Mr. C. G. Porter (New Zealand) and Mr. L. J. Corbett (Gloucestershire), the City High Sheriff (Mr. W. P. Cullis) and Mrs. Cullis, Mr. S. S. Dean (Manager of the New Zealand team), Mr. A. J. Gardner (President of the Gloucestershire Rugby Football Union), Captain W. S. Donne (President of the Rugby Union), Mr. W. T. Pearce (Gloucestershire representative of the Rugby Union), Mr. W. R. Meredith (Vice-President of the County Union), Dr. Arnold Alcock (President of the Gloucester Rugby Football Club), Alderman J. O. Roberts, Mr. H. G. Norman, the Deputy Mayor (Mr. W. C. Matthews), Sir James Bruton (ex-President of the Gloucester Club), His Honour Judge Wilson (with the New Zealand team), Mr. J. H. Tratt (Hon. Treasurer of the County

Union), the Town Clerk (Mr. G. Sheffield Blakeway), Mr. A. F. Fielding (an ex-President of the County Union), Mr. R. Fear (Referee), Mr. E. S. Bostock Smith, Mr. J. Milburn (an ex-President of the County Union), Mr. A. J. Gardner, Mr. F. Gardner, Mr. R. A. Riddell (Weston-super-Mare), Mr. Dustin, Mr. Kenneth Norman, Mr. Ralph Roberts (Hon. Secretary of the County Union), Mr. Arthur Hudson, Mr. J. T. Brookes, Mr. G. F. Clutterbuck, and Mr. E. Keys.

The toast of the King having been duly honoured and a verse of the National Anthem sung, the Mayor extended a cordial welcome to the New Zealanders. he expressed regret for inability to be present from Earl Beauchamp, Sir Lionel Darell, Col. Russell Kerr, the Lord Mayor of Bristol, the Mayor of Cheltenham, and others.

The Mayor said Rugby enthusiasts in England had been looking forward eagerly to the New Zealanders' visit, and it was with the greatest satisfaction that the people of Gloucester heard that the Rugby Union had been able to allot a fixture at Gloucester. The match had been talked of for weeks and at the culmination of the visit of the All Blacks to the city he was glad to welcome them to the Guildhall, and to tell them with what pleasure the citizens of Gloucester looked upon their visit. He (the Mayor) had the pleasure of seeing the New Zealand team at Weston-super-Mare and dining with them.

He then expressed the hope that the weather conditions would be better for their visit to Gloucester, but while the rain was as bad he thought they would agree that the ground was not so waterlogged. Gloucester had been fortunate in the visits received from Colonists. New Zealand, Australian and Canadian bowlers had played in the city, and the city had done its best to welcome them and entertain them. He hoped the All Blacks would take back with them pleasant memories of their visit to Gloucester. He was afraid they had seen but little of the old city as their stay was so short but he could assure them that there was

much which would have interested them, including of course the Cathedral which was noted all over the world. The fact that Gloucester was the most inland port in the country was of interest and they would have found the waterways which served the port worth inspecting.

Amongst the most important of Gloucester's achievements was the production of some first class football players. (Hear, hear). Unfortunately the captain of the team, Tom Voyce, was away touring in South Africa, and Gloucestershire had had to do without him that day. He was sure Mr. Voyce was disappointed not to be back in time to play.

Gloucestershire and Gloucester had records in Rugby football of which they might well be proud. Gloucester was celebrating its football jubilee this season and they were pleased to have with them that evening Mr. Arthur Hudson, the Secretary of the Club. Mr. Hudson was he believed the only representative of the players who met the All Blacks in 1905. He was in his time a very capable and popular three-quarter back.

Not only were they glad to see the players from New Zealand but the visitors they had brought with them. The people of Britain could never forget the help and assistance the men from the Colonies gave in the great war. They were very proud of them and especially of the boys from New Zealand who were ready to help in Britain's great trial. In New Zealand they spoke the mother tongue, had the same ideals as had the people of England and he was sure they had great love for the mother country. He would leave it for others to speak about the match but he would say that he was glad that they had not given Gloucestershire a greater beating than Somerset. The two counties were great rivals and now neither could crow over the other. (Applause).

Mr. A. J. Gardner in proposing the toast of "Our New Zealand visitors," said in welcoming the New Zealand team they recognised what a splendid impetus their predecessors of 19 years ago gave to Rugby in

England. He thought they would find that the standard of play in the old country had greatly improved and if their records were not so favourable as those of the team of 1905 they must remember they were meeting more formidable opponents. He trusted their tour in England would be a happy one.

Mr. Dean, in reply, said on behalf of the New Zealand team he most heartily thanked them for their splendid welcome to that fine old city. Since their arrival in England, three weeks ago, they had received right royal treatment. In coming to England they felt they were coming home.

He regretted that the water supply should have needed replenishing just now. At Weston they were told that Mr. Quick, being in the water supply department, had something to do with it, but Gloucester had no such excuse. He regretted that more time had not been allotted for their stay in Gloucester, but from what they had seen and the welcome they had received, he was sure all would go back to New Zealand with very happy memories of the city. On behalf of the team, he would express thanks to the Mayor and Mayoress for their hospitality, and also to Mr. Pearce and Mr. Ralph Roberts, who had done so much for their entertainment. (Applause).

Mr. Porter proposed "The Gloucestershire Rugby Football Team." He said the New Zealand team had enjoyed that afternoon's game very much, and they congratulated Gloucestershire upon the very fine game they had given them. He was sorry the weather was so bad, for they had heard a lot of Corbett, and were expecting great things from him had the conditions been favourable. They had put in a strong back team in order to show the spectators how their backs could play, but successful back play under the circumstances was impossible. However, they hoped to meet many of the Gloucestershire players in the International games

later on. They wished the Gloucestershire team a very successful season. (Applause).

Musical honours were accorded to the Gloucestershire team, as they had been to the New Zealanders.

In reply, Mr. Corbett said had the weather been better there might have been more to say about the game, which, unfortunately, owing to the wretched conditions, had not reached a very high standard. Gloucestershire had a reputation for playing a good open game, but all would agree that under the circumstances that was impossible. He was sure both teams would be glad of the opportunity of meeting again under better conditions. He thought the Gloucestershire pack rose to the occasion admirably and did splendidly seeing that they were playing against a much stronger side from the point of view of combination. However, the New Zealand side would take a lot of beating. He hoped some of the members of the Gloucestershire team would have the chance of meeting them again in the future. (Applause).

The toast "The Mayor and Mayoress" was accepted with musical honours, on the proposition of Mr. Meredith, the Mayor making suitable response.

At the request of the Mayor the tourists gave their war cry and dance, and were heartily cheered; and after the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" the visitors left for the Hippodrome, the management having invited them to "The Belle of New York."

Mementoes of the function were provided in the shape of flags bearing the initials of the rival teams. The catering was carried out excellently by Mrs. Stanley Smith, of the Spread Eagle Hotel.