

### NOTTINGHAM REPORT

On Sunday, April 12th, representatives of the four British baseball organisations which had participated in the conference at Birmingham met at Nottingham. The meeting of this steering committee was held at the Co-operative Education Hall. Those present were Mr. W.S. Mackenzie (C.C.P.R.), F.P. Adey and P. Ash (S.B.A.), H. McAvan and K. Clappison (Hull and Yorkshire B.A.), D. Price and J. Adams (Merseyside League), D. Akers and D. Smallwood (National League). William Morgan acted as chairman.

After discussion lasting for four hours the principal recommendations of this steering committee were as follows:-

- A. That the British Baseball Federation should be wound up.
- B. That a new national body should be formed, the name favoured for this body was Baseball Association of Great Britain.
- C. That this national body should have one representative from each affiliated league or area sitting on its council. In addition to these representatives, there should be three officers, namely chairman, secretary, and treasurer, and these officers are to be independent, in the sense that while they may play or umpire, they are not to hold any of the key offices in any area or league. It was considered that certainly in the case of the secretary, to carry out the work involved if baseball is ever to make any progress, would make such demands on his time that it would be impossible to combine the secretaryship of the national body with an office in any subordinate organisation. The committee recommends that D. Akers, P. Ash, and K. Clappison should be elected to the offices of chairman, secretary, and treasurer respectively. Each of these men agreed that if elected to office in the B.A.G.B. he would resign from any office he held in any subordinate association or league.
- D. That the three men recommended as officers for the new body should consult with each other during the summer for the purpose of drawing up a constitution for the proposed body. This executive committee to report to the steering committee in the autumn.

A wide range of topics were discussed including the question of uniformity in playing rules, what type of affiliation might be adopted, and the thorny problems of whether the new body should affiliate to the N.B.C. of America, and/or the European Baseball Federation. Mr. Akers pointed out that unless the proposed body applied to the N.L. immediately requesting the transfer of that league's E.B.F. affiliation, many problems could arise.



# BASEBALL

## Courier

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### BASEBALL CONFERENCE

An all day conference was held at the Austin British Legion Club, Birmingham, on Sunday, April 5th. This conference was organised by Peter Ash, External Affairs representative of the Southern Baseball Association. The object of the conference was to bring together as many baseball officials as possible for a frank discussion of the problems facing the game. It was hoped that as a result of such an exchange of views, some formula could be arrived at whereby the game could be advanced on a national basis.

Some forty persons attended the conference, those present including, National League officers, D. Akers, D. Smallwood, G. Livsley; Merseyside League, D. Price and P. Hemmings; Hull and Yorkshire Association, H. McAvan and K. Clappison; Southern Association, L. Henke, F. Adey, G. Gaunt and P. Ash; Royal Dutch Baseball Association, Jan Hartog; Central Council for Physical Recreation, Mr. Mackenzie. Others attending were Mr. T. Tomkinson, formerly secretary of the British Baseball Federation; and representatives of the following clubs, Stretford Saints, Austin British Legion, Nottingham Saints, Garringtons' B.C., Southend Aces, Essex Tigers, Thames Board Mills, Sutton Pearly Kings, and Curzon Pirates. A most interesting visitor was Mr. Clive Butterworth, who had come across from Waterford, Republic of Ireland. Mr. Butterworth has introduced the game into Ireland, he has three teams playing at Waterford. Shortly, he is moving to Dublin and he hopes to have much greater scope for fostering the game in the Irish capital, than he has had in the relatively small town of Waterford.

It had been intended that Mr. Hartog would act as chairman,

but he stated that as he had come to the conference as an observer, charged with the task of making a report to his national organisation on the existing position of British baseball, he did not wish to act as chairman. W.T. Morgan, publisher of this periodical, was then invited to take the chair, and accepted the invitation.

The secretaries of the National League, the Merseyside League, and an officer of the S.B.A. then spoke briefly on the game in their respective areas. The Hull and Yorkshire representatives faced a dual handicap, inasmuch as the secretary Mr. McAvan had laryngitis, and that both of them were officers of the British Baseball Federation. As officers of the B.B.F. they may have felt that this meeting had been convened in order to supplant that body. Mr. Clappison stated that they were puzzled as to the reasons for calling this meeting, and that he and his colleague had attended mainly to listen to the discussion.

D. Akers, D. Price, F. Adey, L. Henke, and P. Ash then discussed at some length the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the B.B.F. This topic generated a certain amount of heat, but past misunderstandings were brought out into the open, and as a result, everybody seemed to arrive at the conclusion that errors of judgement had been made, and that we should all learn from the mistakes which had been made in order to avoid similar errors in the future.

Mr. Hartog described the progress made in Holland, and pledged the assistance of his organisation if only Britain would organise an effective national body. Among other statements Mr. Hartog promised that a Dutch national team would visit Britain if and when a representative British team could be selected.

Mr. Mackenzie of the C.C.P.R. made several useful contributions to the discussion, helping to draw speakers back to the central issue, i.e., the benefits to be obtained by organising on a national basis.

The chairman of the National League, Mr. Akers, had exploded a bombshell during the morning by stating, and displaying documentary proof, that the National League had been accepted as a member of the European Baseball Federation. The consequences following this acceptance were that the National League could enter a team for the European Championships, the National League champions could enter the European Cup competition, and that the National League could bar any British club, league, or association from international competition.

This news was not calculated to please the representatives of the other British baseball organisations. The S.B.A. spokesmen were adamant that while they were willing to join a national body, the national body had to be an association which they could enter as equals of the other bodies present, and that on no account would they affiliate to the National League.

Mr. Mackenzie of the C.C.P.R., who had spoken earlier of various grants which might be obtainable by a properly constituted national governing body, declared that the C.C.P.R. would be most unlikely to recognise the National League as such a national governing body. Mr. Mackenzie suggested as a result of a proposal by D. Thomas (Stretford), that a steering committee be set up charged with producing proposals for the formation of a national body. After the lunch interval the gathering voted that a steering committee should be formed, and that it should consist of the chairman of each British baseball organisation represented at the conference, or a representative of the chairman, plus one other representative from each of the four groups. The chairman of this committee to be W.T. Morgan. It was arranged that this steering committee would meet at Nottingham on Sunday, April 12th.

After the lunch interval the chairman of the National League announced that after consulting with his fellow officers, the National League was willing to allow the affiliation to the European Baseball Federation to be transferred to a national governing body in the event of its formation.

Most of those present came away in a more optimistic mood than had seemed probable prior to lunch.

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THOUGHTS FROM MANCHESTER by Andy Parkes.

Stretford Saints are in the forefront of inter-area baseball in England as 1963 champions of the National League. We are looking forward to the day when the N.L. will have sufficient clubs in membership to operate a North and a South Division, possibly with Birmingham being represented in each of these divisions. The top two teams from each division could perhaps meet at Birmingham for a two day play-off tournament to decide the English title. The team to represent England in Europe to be selected after this tournament.

However the Merseyside and London areas do not appear to realise the vital necessity of strong inter-area competition,

without which the game will never obtain publicity in the national press and on television. Neither medium is interested in area baseball. A good example is ice-hockey, a game with many problems similar to our own. However, ice-hockey is being screened regularly on BBC Grandstand because of its policy of national competition.

Stretford Saints continue to pioneer the game in the Manchester area, and we are seeking an enclosed ground so that we can improve the status of the game, and also charge for admission to the several hundreds who attend games, given decent weather and attractive opponents. Unfortunately last season we beat some sides very heavily, and a spectator does not require expert knowledge to sense the lack of bite in such one-sided encounters. However, strong English teams such as Hull Aces and Bromsgrove gave us some hard fought games.

When we travelled away, we were surprised at the lack of spectators on most grounds, even at the Southern League versus National League All-Star game. Every club has a local newspaper, which is usually only too pleased to receive any sports news during the summer months. It is the duty of every ball-club to supply news items to their local press so that interest in the game will be built-up.

One project in which we can expect interest, is our three game tour in Holland during September. This tour we are undertaking at the invitation of Jan Hartog, N.B.C. Commissioner for Holland. We are taking our strongest team for this short tour, by means of which we are hoping to create as much publicity as possible in England, and also to show Holland some smart heads-up British baseball.

We will be seeking extra depth in our pitching staff, and may strengthen this department by calling on other National League stars such as Johnny Barrass (Bromsgrove) and Frank Parker (Hull), as we are scheduled to play three games in four days, venues being Rotterdam, Haarlem, and The Hague.

We have heard of several teams which started training earlier than is their custom this season, in an effort to dethrone us as N.L. champions. Well, let them all come, we aim to be the Yankees of the National League.

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received by 29th May. The annual subscription to BASEBALL COURIER is 4/-. P.O.'s. should be made payable to W.T. Morgan, and should be sent to 11 Heath Street, Riverside, Cardiff.

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#### SOUTHERN NEWS

The Southern Baseball League will this season have a Senior Division, and Division 1 North, and Division 1 South. The Senior Division will consist of U.S. Navy (London), Fords Sports, Thames Board Mills, Richmond Red Sox, Richmond Knights, Middlesex Athletics. Division 1 North comprises Southend Aces, Essex Tigers, Harlow Hustlers, Enfield Dodgers, Middlesex Athletics 2, Venturers Boys Club (Ruislip). This latter club has been formed from the former players of the Ruislip All-British Dodgers, a Babe Ruth League team. Division 2 South is made up of Brighton Jets, Crawley Giants, Crawley Beavers, Beckenham Bluejays, and Sutton Pearly Kings. Pearly Kings are a new club organised by Bert Baker, a policeman who became acquainted with the game while living for some years in Winnipeg. New clubs are always welcome. Unfortunately, in the South, while new clubs are formed almost every season, we also lose old clubs each season. This season Kodak will not be competing, this is rather tragic as the Kodak club was founded as far back as 1936. Ford Sports and Thames Board Mills are now the only survivors of the pre-war period.

We have one club in the Southern Baseball Association which has not entered the Southern League, this is Curzon Pirates, known last year as Barking Tornados. Curzon will play friendly games with the aim of developing their players, who are mainly youngsters, to a point where they can hope to compete successfully in the Southern League within a season or two. Venturers Boys Club have had ground problems, and all their fixtures will be played on their opponents' grounds.

This season we are repeating our scheme for inter-county games, and have extended the idea to embrace in addition to Essex, Surrey, and Middlesex, a combined Kent-Sussex team. This new entry will be selected from the two Crawley clubs, Brighton, and Beckenham. To avoid fixture congestion, these inter-county games are planned for Saturdays.

Once again the Southern League champions will play a game against an All-Star team selected from the Rest of the League. This year, once again, this game will be advertised as U.S. Navy

v. The South of England. It is hoped to stage this game on the Crystal Palace F.C. ground early in May, at the time of writing there is a little uncertainty regarding this ground being available, if for any reason the game cannot be played there, it will be played at Rosehill Park, Sutton, the home ground of U.S. Navy. The team selected to represent the South of England is as follows: Manager, Terry Warner (T.B.M.); Coaches, Geoff Phillips (Middlesex Athletics), Bill Isaacs (Fords); 1b., Peter Crook (Richmond Red Sox); 2b., Don Tinton (Fords); ss, George Pearmain (Fords); 3b, Bob Logan (Richmond Red Sox); lf, Ossie Dean (Richmond Red Sox); cf, John Mahoney (Richmond Knights); rf, Les Banks (Fords); c, Pete Gamman (Fords); pitchers, Bob Nease (Richmond Red Sox), John Booth (Richmond Red Sox), Brian Hart (T.B.M.), George Stark (Beckenham Bluejays); subs, Bill Dawber (T.B.M.), Don Blakely (Middlesex Athletics), Pete Staples (Richmond Red Sox).

Last year the corresponding All-Star game drew 1,700 spectators, we hope that this figure will be surpassed this season.

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#### HULL PRESS RELEASE from Don Smallwood.

The Hull season opens with a number of practice games and the Consolation Cup game. Contestants for this trophy are Hull Braves and Blackburn Buccaneers. Apart from the Kingston Aces, a player development team sponsored by East Hull Aces, there are no new teams in the Hull and Yorkshire Association.

This season is of great importance to baseball on Humberside. Last season we had a marked increase in support and interest, and it is up to everyone in baseball to endeavour to maintain, and if possible to increase this interest in our sport. Presentation is the key factor. Hon. secretaries should ensure that they are conversant with local league rules, and should carry them out to the letter. Umpires should ensure that games commence at the scheduled time. On more than one occasion I have seen the start of a game delayed while the players and spectators have had to await the arrival of a "star" player. This late arrival by certain players is as harmful as another habit which some players have. This is the turning out in any odd attire, when his club has provided him with a uniform. This type of player would be the man to turn out in a baseball uniform if his team had elected to play in overalls. If only

these players would realise the damage they do to the game! Do not for one moment think that I am criticising any club which cannot as yet afford uniforms. I use the words "as yet" because I place uniforms high in the ranking of my order of priorities for improving the game. Unfortunately, I cannot see a solution to this problem of the player turning out in odd garb. I can not foresee a club refusing to permit a player to take part in a game. As for the umpires, they can hardly be expected to know if a club has a full set of uniforms. What I do know, is that this is one of the many problems which collectively answer the question, "What's wrong with baseball?" When we successfully deal with these individual problems, then we may expect to see baseball making some real progress.

The Hull League is hoping to persuade Hull Mormons to re-enter. The League is also planning that each team will play each other team in three games for league points. One home, and one away game, plus a third meeting on neutral ground. Venues considered for these third contests are Leeds, York, Withernsea, and areas of Hull where the game is no longer played. This is an attempt to spread the game, and to provide a fuller fixture list for our clubs.

Elsewhere in the "Courier" there is a report of the Conference at Birmingham, but I feel that I must comment on the wonderful spirit that I sensed in this event. At last these great barriers of mistrust and jealousy are being overthrown. While the new and happier atmosphere will be welcomed by officials, the most important fact is that baseball must inevitably benefit. The important thing is that every league and area must enter the new association and give it our loyal support. We have all been guilty of criticising the administration of our respective leagues and of our national organisations. We should realise that in criticising the shortcomings of our administrators, we are actually criticising ourselves. We could all do a little more to improve the running of our own associations.

Mr. W. Burton, Hull and Yorkshire Association chairman, is in hospital for surgical treatment. His many baseball friends wish him a speedy recovery, and hope that we shall soon see him in attendance at our games. In conclusion, all baseball folk in Yorkshire extend their best wishes for a great season to the other areas, and we look forward to renewing old friendships while playing or watching the greatest of all games.