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With the Newfoundland Regiment at Ayr

Complimentary Dinner Given Our Boys by Good People of Ayr in Town Hall—The Affair was Marked by Stirring Speeches on Colonial Loyalty—Newfoundlanders Will Always be Assured of a Warm Welcome in Scotland.

A complimentary dinner was given to the officers non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment, at present quartered in Ayr, in the Town Hall on Thursday evening, when tables were laid for over 400 guests. The idea of giving a cordial welcome to our brave Colonials who have given up everything and come thousands of miles to defend the Mother Country originated with Provost Mitchell and Mr. Walter Neilson, of Ewenfield, and willing hearts throughout the town and county at once came to their assistance. As Provost Mitchell said, "the thing had only to be suggested and it was done." Subscriptions soon came pouring in from large numbers of burgh and county gentlemen, with the result that the success of the function was assured from the start. It was a splendid tribute in general to the magnificent loyalty of our colonial brethren, and gave striking proof of the hospitality for which Ayrshire is famed the world over. The proceedings throughout were of the utmost cordiality, and passed off without the least hitch, commencing at 6.30 p.m. and lasting until after 10 p.m.

Provost Mitchell presided at the dinner, and amongst others present were:—The Marquis of Ailsa, Mr. R. A. Oswald of Auchincruive, Mr. Walter Neilson of Ewenfield; Mr. P. J. Mackie of Corraith; Mr. P. Watson of Drumsale; Bailie Murray, ex-Bailie Gould, Mr. J. A. Morris, Mr. George Davidson of Dunmoy; Hon. J. P. Hay, Mr. Wm. Brown, Inverclyde; Mr. Wm. Dunlop, Kensal Tower; Capt. J. A. O. Murdoch, Ayrshire Yeomanry; Capt. and Adjutant Pollock, 15th R.S.P.; Capt. Cockburn, Dr. Brown and Mr. P. A. Thomson, Town Clerk.

The officers of the Newfoundland Regiment present were:—Major Whitaker, commanding the 1st Regiment; Captains E. S. Ayre, A. Montgomerie, L. Paterson, J. A. Ledingham and W. Pippy; Lieutenants S. Robertson, F. C. Mellor, C. Rendell, K. Keegan, J. Rowsell, J. O'Grady, W. Edwards, K. Goodyear, J. Irvine, W. Grant, P. Cashin, S. Norris, S. Gane, S. James, W. Ryall, L. Murphy, R. Burnham, W. Ross, H. Power, A. Summers, S. Lumsden, J. Edens and W. Ayre; and Captain Henderson, Highland Light Infantry (attached). Mr. P. A. Thomson intimated apologies for absence from the Earl of Eglinton and Winton, Mr. W. D. Russell, Colonel Northcott, Mr. J. G. Walker, Newark Castle; Sir George Younger, Bart., M.P.; Sir Matthew Arthur, Sir James Bell, Montserrat; Mr. W. Wilson of Castlehill; Mr. James Kennedy of Doonholm; and others.

Sir George Younger's Tribute.

Sir George Younger, M.P. for Ayr Burghs, who was unable to be present, wrote as follows:—"London, 11th January. My dear Provost, I very much feared when you found yourself unable to give the Newfoundland dinner on Friday that it would be impossible for me to attend. It is usually the only day in the week at present on which it is at all possible for me to be away from London as the House does not sit that day, and my munitions work and work of the Appeal Tribunal in connection with the Derby Recruiting scheme is done on the other four days of the week. As I feared, the Appeal Tribunal is summoned to sit on Thursday at 11.30, and as questions of great urgency and importance have to be dealt with at that sitting, I am obliged to attend. This, to my great regret, prevents me taking part as one of the guests in the dinner to the Newfoundland troops quartered in your midst, and whose patriotism and self-sacrifice it is right that we should honour. Nothing in this war has been so remarkable or more gratifying than the magnificent response made to the call by our Colonies and Dominions. The deeds they have performed in the war, and the bravery they have shown will ever be held in grateful remembrance and it is inconceivable to me that at the end of this struggle the relations of the United Kingdom with its Dominions can remain as they are. Some means must and ought to be found of binding the whole Empire together in a way which seemed to be coming gradually but which is now an imperative duty, and as our brethren across the seas have shared to the full our risks and losses in waging the present war, so should they in the future have a definite and powerful influence in the whole policy of the Empire. I should be very glad

if you will kindly express the great regret I feel at not being able to be with you on Thursday, and say that I join with you most heartily in your welcome and your thanks to our guests. Believe me, yours sincerely, Geo. Younger."

The dinner, which was a sumptuous one, was purveyed in excellent style by Mr. J. Bowden, Ayr Coffee House, the menu comprising, roast beef, steak pie, roast turkey and ham (cold), plum pudding and apple tart. The usual loyal toasts were submitted by the Provost, and pledged with the greatest enthusiasm.

"Our Guests." Provost Mitchell proposed the toast of "Our Guests." He said that at the outbreak of the war, when the news was flashed over the vast British Dominions, like the blast of the bugle call to arms, there came a whole-hearted and unanimous response from all British Dominions, a response which not only staggered our enemies but made the world wonder. Newfoundland up to that time had no connection with the naval and military forces of the British Empire, except a few hundred fishermen, who had been trained as Royal Naval Reserve on board of H.M. ships stationed at St. John's, the capital of the Colony. There were no troops of any kind in the island. When war was declared, a movement was at once set on foot, and 500 men were raised, who, after preliminary training, left St. John's for England on 4th October, 1914, exactly two months after war was proclaimed. That ready response, gentlemen, showed at once the

Spirit of Newfoundland.

From the outbreak right down to last week, when there arrived in Ayr 100 men and 3 officers, Newfoundland has given two battalions of men, who have left their homeland and laid aside all civil employment, leaving home and loved ones to fight for, and if need be, ready to lay down their lives to uphold and maintain the British Empire. (Applause.) It may be of interest to note that the population of Newfoundland, with its dependency of Labrador, is almost identical with that of Ayrshire, while the population of St. John's, the capital of the Colony, is almost identical with that of Ayr. Of the 33,000 inhabitants of St. John's, over one-sixth are now serving in the Royal Navy in the first Canadian or British regiments, and the supply is not yet exhausted. (Hear, hear.) The first Battalion left Britain for the Dardanelles in August, 1915, and had the good fortune to accomplish work for which they were specially mentioned in Brigade Orders, while two officers were

Mentioned in Despatches

and one received the Military Cross. The regiment is now "somewhere in the Mediterranean." Men from Newfoundland, it is my privilege and honour to address you to-night in the name of the people of Ayr and Ayrshire, and extend to you a hearty welcome to the shores of Britain and to the old town of Ayr. I have had the privilege and honour on more than one occasion of welcoming representatives from our Dominions over the seas, who were paying us a friendly visit, some on pleasure, others to see our historical land. But the welcome I give you to-night is different to any other, as the occasion marks a new era in the history of the British Empire. The importance of it will live in history and add a link in that chain which this war is welding round our Empire, and which must never become rusty, but grow stronger and brighter as years roll on. Every year distances become shorter. Trade seeks the shortest route. The direct route from the Old World to the New lies across Newfoundland. With an island railway brought to the nearest point of communication that international complications will permit, and by the use of fast services by land and sea, it is calculated that there could be a saving of sixty to seventy hours, so that the journey between Liverpool and New York would be reduced to a little more than three days for modern steamers. Newfoundland would then become

The Gateway to the Great West.

While our fleet continues to rule the waves with strong ships upon our waters, firm friends on every shore, the British Empire of the future, united and bound together, will teach the War Lords of Germany that world power dominated by frightfulness or German culture is a dream which can never come true. (Ap-

plause.) I would then, as representing this town and district, wish good health and a happy time to each of you in your sojourn amongst us, and that when the times comes for you to take your place in the battle front, you will feel physically fit, and I am certain we will hear more of our Newfoundland boys. (Applause.) We will watch with interest your career, and if you should return here again, or after the war go straight home to your own land, I trust you will carry with you happy memories of the time you spent amongst us. If it is the fortune of any of you to pay us a visit when peace has been restored, that peace for which we are all fighting, you will be welcome ten times over. (Applause.) You have, therefore, the best wishes of the people of Ayr and this community. Whatever opinion you may have of us and our ways, I can assure you that our hearts are with you. We wish you God-speed, and a big share in the glory and honours of

The Victory that Awaits Us.

a victory, the only one the British Empire can accept, viz., full surrender of that nation who treats with scorn all that goes to make life worth living—liberty, honour and justice to the weakest and humblest. (Applause.) Go forward, then, our worthy cousins from over the seas! Never did soldiers draw the sword in a more righteous cause. We have had uphill work, but as the Scotch saying is "Pit a stout heart to a sly brae. Push on, though it be uphill. The top of the hill is drawing nearer, and then will appear the dawn of that time that our national poet speaks of "That's coming yet for a' that, when man to man the world o'er shall brothers be for a' that." (Applause.)

Major Whitaker's Reply.

Major Whitaker, in acknowledging the toast, said that in the first place he was a Newfoundlander only by association with the regiment, and, in the second place, the Provost's eloquent words required a good deal of reply. He had been associated with the regiment for over six months, and he felt he could claim that he knew the men of the regiment pretty well, and he knew there were no more warmhearted people in the world than the Newfoundlanders. (Applause.) One of the consolations of this dreadful war to him was the fact that he had become associated with the Newfoundland regiment, and one of the consolations to the men who had come from overseas was that they should have found their home in Scotland, the land which was noted throughout the world for its hospitality, and for the genuine emotions which shed the breasts of Scotsmen. (Applause.) They had received since they had been in Scotland a generous treatment which could not have been exceeded anywhere, and they had received in Ayrshire, and extend to which they could feel nothing but gratitude and which they would remember all their lives. (Applause.) It was curious that the Provost should have dwelt upon the foundations and building up of the British Empire, for

Newfoundland Was Justly Proud

of having been the first territory, outside the Channel Islands, to be added to Britain. Sir Humphrey Gilbert raised the standard of Queen Elizabeth in 1583, some years before Scotland annexed England. (Laughter and applause.) Newfoundland was also justly proud of being one of the first to receive responsible Government, which had been enjoyed by the island for over 60 years. The only complaint, if it was a complaint, that he had to make about Newfoundland, was that they did not start the Army a little sooner. If they had had an army prior to the war, some of the difficulties with which they had had to contend would have disappeared, but they had made ample amends in the men they had sent to fight the battles of the Empire, both as regards quality and in their readiness to learn their work. (Applause.) He was not going to do more at that stage than thank the Provost and those associated with him for their kindness, they received in Ayr and district. (Applause.) At the close of the proceedings he would ask Captain Montgomerie, who was regimental adjutant in St. John's, and who was for many weeks recruiting officer and raised the regiment, and who had been in this country with drafts, to

(Continued on page 5.)

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