

Lecture to the G.W.V.A. on the B.E.S.L. Conference



G. J. WHITTY, O.B.E., M.C., who, in conjunction with Capt. A. E. J. Fox and Lieut.-Col. T. Nangle, C.F., represented the G.W.V.A. of Newfoundland at the recent Conference of the British Empire Service League held in London.

Last night's illustrated lecture to the War Veterans by Capt. Gerald Whitty, O.B.E., M.C., Secretary of the G.W.V.A., attracted a large audience. The lecturer held the attention of the gathering not only by the interesting matter contained in his address, but also by his delivery which stimulated every point of view.

The lecturer explained in detail the great object of the British Empire Service League, which embraced within its membership representatives from every part of the Empire which had taken its stand in the war with the Mother Country. The League is formed by bringing together the former and living heroes of the war in a common resting place where they may be bound together in a inseparable unit, and that could be for the benefit of the Empire as a whole, and also of each individual who had taken his place in the field.

The B.E.S.L. of which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is Patron and Field Marshal, Lord Haig is Grand President, represents some million ex-service men, and is active in every part of the Empire. The Prince of Wales has taken the initiative of the B.E.S.L. and has been fully illustrated. An appeal for funds on Aug. 4th last met with a generous response, and in 4 days the sum of \$150,000 was contributed to aid those who were unemployed, in addition to numerous offers of employment were renewed.

On the election of officers being held, Field Marshal Lord Haig was nominated for re-election as Grand President and the honour of second in the motion fell to Newfoundland. Capt. Whitty drew attention to the important manner in which matters of the administration were conducted, and explained that the services of those who did the work were voluntary.

The conference having been opened by His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the election of officers having been held, the reports of the Advisory Committee were presented. They dealt with the establishment of the League Headquarters, Royal Appointments, League of Nations, Washington Conference, Armistice Day, Unity and Reconciliation, Pensions, and Gratuity and United Services Fund. Resolutions were passed favouring contracts within the Empire, the formation of the Empire, the formation of an English speaking Veterans Association, the issue of bars to War Veterans, the establishment of an Empire Club in London, Representation at the Imperial Conference, Support of the League of Nations, and the re-adjustment of Pensions to N.S.R. Royal Reserve men. In connection with the latter there was every reason to believe that the drawbacks which at present exist would be removed. The balance of the Medals for the N.S.R. Naval Reserve would shortly be issued, and prize money in arrears would be paid in due course.

Great praise was expressed for those responsible for the "Veteran" which compared favourably with any other magazine published "by the different organisations. Various functions were attended by the Delegates, and in particular was the luncheon tendered by the N.S.R. G.W.V.A. mentioned.

The activities of the G.W.V.A. were further extended by the formation in London of a branch, the first president of which was Captain J. E. J. Fox.

A high tribute was paid to Capt. Victor Gordon, acting High Commissioner, not alone for his help in connection with the Conference, but also in connection with the good work he is doing to promote the welfare of Newfoundland.

In concluding Capt. Whitty extended his thanks to all those who had shown hospitality to the N.S.R. delegates.

PILGRIMAGE TO FRANCE

It was my privilege to pay a visit to the battlefields in France and Belgium, accompanied by Lieut.-Col. T. Nangle, C.F., whose work in connection with our graves and Memorials is so well known. In making this pilgrimage to the graves of our dead, I was satisfying a great desire. Six days were spent in touring the various areas in which the Regiment fought and it proved most interesting, apart from the sad aspect. The reconstruction in the devastated areas is proceeding rapidly, this being due to the wonderful effort put forward by the French and Belgian people. It is almost impossible to visualize places familiar to members of the Regiment as they were when they knew them and as they appear now. The Cemeteries, some 3,000, are rapidly being completed. It will, however, take a number of years for the Imperial War Graves Commission to complete the enormous task they have undertaken. Most of the Cemeteries near the Main Road in the Ypres and other sectors have been completed, graves are in position in those Cemeteries and everywhere is quietude and peace. Those Cemeteries are truly God's Acre and a worthy resting place for our Glorious Dead.

BEAUMONT HAMEL PARK ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE MOST UNIQUE AND ORIGINAL MEMORIAL IN FRANCE

As you are, no doubt, very much interested in the Newfoundland Memorials now being erected in France and Belgium, I should like to tell you what progress has been made to date, and my impressions on visiting Newfoundland's Memorial Park at Beaumont Hamel. The first intimation I had that I was approaching the entrance to our Park was the large sign boards, three of which are placed at the various entrances. The notice is painted in clear and white and reads, "Newfoundland Memorial Park Beaumont Hamel." The work on the Park is progressing very favourably. As will be remembered the purchase price allocated by the Newfoundland Government was \$10,000 with \$5,000 additional for the Monument. This year a final allocation of \$25,000 was granted for the completion of the Park. This sum has since been augmented by \$3,515.00, which sum was collected by the Beaumont Hamel Collector's Committee from the citizens of Newfoundland. This amount, making a total of \$48,515.00, will be sufficient to complete the Park. Eighty-four acres of land has been purchased. Ferro Concrete posts are being placed around the Park which will carry the fencing and wire netting necessary to prevent vermin from damaging the surrounding crops. The fencing will be edged inside and at intervals, Lombardy poplars will be placed. The main entrance is from the road, known during the war as "St. John's Road," which runs from Ocean Villiers to Hamel. The design of the entrance is now being worked out consistent with the finances available. Other entrances will be constructed on side roads and at paths leading to places of interest outside the Park. Near the Main Avenue will be placed the 29th Divisional Memorial. This Memorial will take the form of a simple granite boulder with the Red Triangle in Mosaic. The main avenue circularises the base of the mound upon which the Caribou is to be erected. A spiral path leads from the base of the mound to the top, the outside being faced with rock so as to present the appearance of a natural boulder. The trenches are being kept in their original condition, dug-outs are being restored. Both German and British will present the same condition as during the war. Non-combatant visitors will be afforded an unique opportunity of viewing the battleground as it actually existed on July 1st and during the war. The roads to the Park are being put in condition by an arrangement between the Newfoundland Government and the Commune in which those roads lie. Much assistance has been received from the Mayors and Commune Officials. Recently a considerable number of War Trophies including heavy guns were obtained from the French and British Governments. Those guns will be placed in the actual German Gun Pits within the Park. Beaumont Hamel Park is the only Park of its kind under construction and is already attracting hundreds of visitors so much so that taxi drivers and guides have resented bringing tourists and pilgrims to the Park on account of so much time being spent inspecting the trenches, etc., the drivers thereby losing on the fare. No finer tribute to the splendid idea of memorializing Beaumont Hamel could be paid them than that recently by the War Office when it sent 1,000 Officers and Cadets to the Park to learn the lessons of the war and particularly those which applied to July 1st. The staff employed on the Park is most efficient and doing its work well. As many as forty are employed at various periods. The labour is cheap and reliable. Mr. Rud. H. K. Cochius, who visited St. John's recently in connection with the Memorial, has shown great energy and enthusiasm regarding the horticulture work, nursery for Newfoundland Seedlings and the project in general. Beaumont Hamel Park, when completed, will be a Memorial second to none. In years to come much more costly Memorials of greater architectural and sculptural beauty may be erected by the Nation, but none will be more unique or appealing to future generations than the simple original tribute made by Newfoundland to its gallant sons who died at Beaumont Hamel on July 1st, 1918.

OPENING CEREMONY

It is hoped to have the Cemeteries in the Beaumont Hamel Park areas completed this year. It is the intention to have the names of our fallen who died in all theatres of war and whose graves are unknown inscribed on tablets, which will be placed in suitable place in the Park, possibly on the entrance gates. The Park should be completed next year and an invitation will be extended to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to perform the opening ceremony and unveil the Monuments. This ceremony will be arranged to coincide with the visit of the Newfoundland Pilgrims. The Monuments include the N.S.R. Caribou, 29th Divisional Memorial and possibly the 101st Scottish Division Memorial. The Caribou, when erected, will be visible from practically all parts of the Somme Battlefields.

GUEDECOURT MEMORIAL

Next we come to Guedecourt Memorial. This Memorial is erected on a splendid site that which marks the most advanced position attained by the Regiment during the Guedecourt Battle. The Monument is plainly visible from the Albert-Basempere Road, the objective of the Les Transloy Ridge Battles. Colonel Nangle is now awaiting for the planting season to complete this Memorial.

MASNIERES MEMORIAL

The location of this Memorial is ideal. It is situated on the Cambrai-Peronne main road, which runs between Paris and North Eastern France. The boulders for its base were obtained from the Ardennes, and weigh approximately 28 tons each. The Caribou being set on the top of a natural rock crag. The plot surrounding this Monument is beautifully laid out. Newfoundland seedlings and flowers are growing well and the Memorial is the centre of attraction to the village of Masnieres and the town of Cambrai.

COURTRAI MEMORIAL (Belgium)

This is the only Memorial to be erected in Belgium to commemorate the achievements of the Regiment in Flanders. It is situated just outside of Courtrai on the main West Flanders Road marking the actual spot where the Regiment crossed the Lys and the final advance in 1918. The Caribou will be placed in position

some time this year and when the Monument is finally completed it should prove a fitting remembrance of our men who fought and died in Belgium.

MONCHIELE-PEBEX MEMORIAL

This Memorial is the last to be erected and so work has, as yet, been done on it. This has been due to the fact that the location is in the centre of the ruins of Monchies which are now being cleared away. The site was, at one time, occupied by an old Monastery, which in later years was used as a farm house. This farm when occupied was reconstructed as a fortress with solid reinforced concrete. It is the intention to preserve the ruins as much as possible and mount the Caribou on them. Iron spalls will be placed on the dug-outs and cellars to prevent unauthorised egress. A gate will be affixed to an entrance and some responsible person in the village will have the custody of the key, so that visitors may inspect the dug-outs. The four feet of the Caribou will rest on an armoured plated observation plate looking out towards Infantry Hill.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES IN CATHEDRAL

The Memorial Plaque placed in Amiens Cathedral to commemorate the deeds of our men during the Somme Battles is a splendid piece of workmanship, simple and dignified in contrast to some of the more expensive tablets erected by other Dominions. The location of the tablet is excellent, and it is viewed by all visitors to this splendid Cathedral. It is, I understand, the intention of the Government to place Memorial Plaques in all the Cathedrals in the other battle areas where our Regiment fought as soon as the Cathedrals have been restored.

NEWFOUNDLAND HAS CARE FOR HER GLORIOUS DEAD WELL

During the course of my Pilgrimage to France and Belgium I was very much impressed by the splendid efforts put forward by the Newfoundland Government through its representative, Colonel Nangle, to perpetuate the glorious memory of our men who died during the War. It was indeed good to feel that one belonged to a country which had done so much to perpetuate her dead. Our Memorials in France and Belgium are unique; they are the admiration of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and tourists. Statuary and architectural gems may always be seen in the big cities of the world but the massive stee Caribou standing erect on a National Red Cross emblem of our country and acting as a sentinel, is a thing to be proud of and evokes the profound admiration of those who are fortunate enough to visit it. The small parks surrounding the Memorials are beautifully laid out. Newfoundland seedlings, spruce, fir, etc., predominate. When the Lombardy Poplars attain their full growth it can be said without fear of contradiction that Newfoundland will indeed have Memorials which should spread throughout the world the fame of the men from Newfoundland who fought during the war. Again when it is remembered that countless thousands of pilgrims from all countries have visited the Battlefields and will continue to do so in years to come, it can readily be seen that in those Memorials Newfoundland has done well to perpetuate its warrior sons.

PILGRIMAGE 1923

Colonel Nangle, C.F., is completing provisional arrangements for the Newfoundland Pilgrimage to the Battlefields in September 1924. Area centres such as Ypres, Cambrai, Arras and Amiens will be created, and Pilgrims desiring to visit graves in those areas will be afforded every opportunity of seeing the desired graves. A specially prepared booklet is being prepared by Colonel Nangle which shows the location of every one of the 101 Cemeteries in which Newfoundlanders are buried. This will greatly facilitate their location. Colonel Nangle has informed me that he is now in receipt of the total cost to cover a pilgrimage of 500 people, and that the proposed figure already named viz: \$300 per head will be sufficient to have the trip materialise. Newfoundlanders who propose joining the Pilgrimage are assured of a most wonderful and interesting experience. The hotels and hostels in the devastated areas are quite comfortable and prices reasonable. The roads are in good condition and no undue hardship is to be met with.

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REMEMBER WITH HONOUR THE 9TH SCOTTISH DIVISION WHO ON THE FIELDS OF FRANCE AND FLANDERS 1918-1918 SERVED WELL.

The Newfoundland Regiment served with this famous Division and a large boulder is placed near the Memorial, having the crest and name of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment carved thereon. The Canadian Memorial at St. Julien is a splendid piece of sculptural beauty, depicting the head and shoulders of a soldier with hands resting on a rifle reversed. This Memorial commemorates the splendid work of the Canadians in withstanding the first gas attack at St. Julien, 1918. At Poelcapelle the French Government has erected a splendid Memorial to Capt. Guynemer, the famous French aviator who brought down some 70 German air-planes. He was killed on September 11th, 1917. Surmounting the pedestal is a large stork in an attitude of flight. This bird was the French Squadron's identification mark. One is seriously surprised to see the many Memorials erected which mark points of great interest, where some of the most severe struggles of the war took place.

NEWFOUNDLAND NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL

The plans for the Newfoundland War Memorial are now finally completed and are in the hands of the granite people, who are submitting costs covering Norwegian, Italian and Cornish granite. As soon as the question of cost has been decided, the granite work for the pedestal and the front facings of the platen will be commenced. In company with Colonel Nangle I visited some of the granite quarries in London, and ascertained that it will be possible to have the granite cut and ready for shipment during March month. The sculptor, Mr. Basil Gotto has the figure of the soldier completed. It is a splendid piece of work. The expression and pose being one of determination. An immediate start is being made on the main piece of statuary, which is a female form representing "Newfoundland." A model has just been found, after much difficulty, and the work should progress favourably. Later the statuary of the Soldier will be commenced, and it is the opinion of the artist and architect, as well as that of Colonel Nangle, that notwithstanding the almost unsurmountable difficulties to be met with, the Memorial will be ready for unveiling on July 1st. As you are already aware, Lord Haig has accepted an invitation extended to him to unveil the Memorial. It is hoped to have other distinguished officers connected with the Regiment present from the Old Country at this Ceremony. Plans are now being drawn up for a worthy reception to Field Marshal Earl Haig and party.

Obituary

MRS. ELLEN BARRON.

Three passed peacefully away, at Riverhead, St. Mary's, on August 28th, an old and highly respected resident in the person of Mrs. Ellen Barron, wife of the late John Barron, at the ripe old age of 72 years. Left to mourn their sad loss are 1 son, 2 daughters, several grandchildren and numerous friends, who will be sorry to learn of her passing. Being of a kind and loving disposition, her loss will be keenly felt by all with whom she came in contact. The funeral, which was largely attended, took place at Riverhead on August 30th and her remains were laid to rest in the family plot in the little R.C. Cemetery. May her soul rest in peace.—COR.

FRANCIS WALSH.

On Saturday, Sept. 8th, the Feast of the birthday of Heolva's, Queen. Death, the stern destroyer of old and young alike, visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Walsh, Forest Road, and snatched from their midst their angel boy, Francis. Early in the summer he underwent an operation for Appendicitis at the General Hospital, and it was fondly hoped that in time and with care his darling would regain his wonted strength, but Providence willed otherwise. "Frank," as he was familiarly called, was possessed of a beautiful, gentle disposition, which endeared him to all who came in contact with him, and he, both at home and in school, was a universal favourite. His untimely death, at the early age of eleven years is therefore a heavy crushing blow to his fond parents, his loving sisters and little brother, and the sympathy of all will go out to them in their hour of bitter sorrow. Many were the tokens of love and esteem for the dearly loved Frank, but none more touching than that of his little class-mates, who had the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered twice for the repose of his dear soul, and who formed a guard of honour at his funeral. Ireland's Poet, the immortal Thomas Moore, has said: "From Love's shining circle The Gems drop away." So this "gem," too rare and precious for our dreary earth, so truly styled "a vale of tears," before being blighted by sin was transported to Paradise to bloom forever in "God's own garden," and unite with the angels in chanting His praises for a glorious eternity. May his dear soul rest in peace. Amen.

Band Concert, Bannerman Park by Mount Cashel Band, in aid of Child Welfare, Wednesday, Sept. 19—sept13.1f

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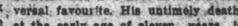
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