

# Report of the Resident Secretary

For February, 1917

During the greater part of the month of February, our accommodation continued to be fully occupied. In preparation for the great spring offensive, when every fit man was required at the front, all available men, Imperials, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, after being examined and passed as being fit once more for active service, were discharged from the Convalescent Homes all over Great Britain, and sent for a few weeks' physical training either in special camps or with their reserve battalions, before returning to rejoin their regiments in France. As regards Canadians in these Convalescent Homes and Hospitals who are certified as unfit for further active service, or even for duty as orderlies, etc., at base camps or in hospitals, the Canadian Medical Service continue their policy of sending them back to Canada as quickly as the necessary ocean transport can be secured.

By these various means, Kingswood, like other Convalescent Homes all over the country, was gradually well cleared out. But the beds did not long remain vacant. This first step in the process of evacuation was quickly followed by the second. All the "Acute" Hospitals in France and Great Britain received orders to prepare for the anticipated heavy casualties, by discharging every man they possibly could, and these men were in turn mostly sent on to the various Convalescent Homes, so that Kingswood, amongst others, was soon filled up again.

The most of the new cases we have thus received during the latter part of the month have continued to be surgical, and as the Canadians have not been engaged in any heavy fighting since October, the men are consequently those who were wounded very seriously several months ago, and whose wounds still require a good deal of careful surgical treatment, dressings and massage.

We also continue to receive a considerable number of men suffering from the effects of the severe winter weather and exposure to wet and cold, such complaints as Rheumatics, Trench Fever, Trench Feet, Influenza and Bronchitis being very common.

But with our capable nursing staff, and ample supplies of surgical appliances, dressings and medicines, we are in a position to cope successfully with all these cases, and to provide all the surgical, massage or medical treatment that may be required to ensure the speedy recovery of the patients.

Quite apart from this, the men continue to appreciate very highly the healthy surroundings, the comfortable rooms, the wholesome

food, and above all the genuine home-like atmosphere of Kingswood. Our old patients never fail to pay us a visit whenever they have an opportunity. Kingswood is a real "home from home," and an influence for good to many a lonely man.

The question of Food Supplies has become a serious matter for every one in Great Britain. The importation of many articles has been greatly restricted or even entirely prohibited, in order to release ships for absolutely essential imports and army transport. Home-grown supplies of necessities such as grain, potatoes, vegetables, are short on account of the bad harvest and scarcity of labor. Prices of all articles of food are increasing rapidly and almost daily. The Food Controller is doing his best to cope with the situation, but it may soon come to compulsory rationing and food tickets for all. By buying in supplies as far ahead as possible, a careful re-arrangement of the menus from week to week to take advantage of the markets, and the most rigid economy in the kitchen, we have not so far been very seriously affected.

We experienced extremely cold, wintry weather in England during the greater part of February, the most severe, in fact, for twenty-two years. The lake in the grounds was frozen over, so that numbers of the patients enjoyed themselves skating there—a rare occurrence in southern England. But the frost played havoc in the vegetable garden! We had fine crops of winter cabbage, kale and cauliflower (which in normal seasons stand well through the ordinary English winter), enough to provide the Home with green vegetables all March, April and May, but the exceptionally severe frost has, unfortunately, ruined them.

Our motor car continued to take out small parties of the men for a run through London, whenever the weather was fine enough.

The comfortable Recreation Rooms continue to be greatly appreciated during the cold weather, and in the long, dark winter evenings, concerts, whist drives, billiard tournaments and other entertainments have continued to be held, and parties of the men have enjoyed several outings. The principal entertainments during the month were as follows: On 1st Feb. we had a very enjoyable evening concert in our Recreation Hall, by the "Elves" troupe of young lady "pierrettes."

On the afternoon of 6th Feb., a party of twenty men went to one of the fortnightly concerts and teas at the Savoy Hotel, London, by invitation of a neighbor, Mrs. Corbett. This