

Newfoundland War Contingent Association

REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY, MR. REEVES.

General Committee Meeting held at the Conference Room, Colonial Office, on Wednesday the 6th December, 1916. Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland, M.P., in the Chair.

1. Minutes.
The Minutes of the last Meeting were taken as read, and signed by the Chairman as correct.

2. Secretary's Report.

The Secretary reported as follows: At our last General Committee Meeting it was reported that the 1st Battalion had landed in France with the 8th Brigade as part of the 29th Division, on the 22nd March last.

It is now permissible to sketch briefly the continuation of the fighting record to the 31st July, the latest date of the adventures of our own Contingent that has been received from the Battalion for the purpose of the compilation of the History of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment.

The 1st Battalion was present at the Battle of the Somme, and went into that engagement about 1000 strong—Officers, N.C.O.'s, and Privates.

These 25 officers and 792 of other ranks were in the front, with a reserve of 10 per cent, the remainder being men employed on ambulance duties, as cooks, on transport, and other duties.

The accounts of the course of the battle and the brave part played by our men have appeared in the Press, but incidents on the field of battle as recorded by Captain Frew show that the attack of the 1st Essex and our own Battalion on Beaumont Hamel was one of the most glorious deeds of that day, and that our men carried on under the devastating fire of the machine guns until only a few reached the German trenches and were seen to jump down into them.

The task was hopeless, and the few who survived knew it to be so, and yet the report of an officer of the K.O.S.B. shows that although their formation was broken to fragments by that terrible fire they were still undismayed. He reports as follows:—

"At 9.30 a.m., a Company of the Newfoundlanders forty strong came up without officers. I gave the signal to my Company (his men had been lying in crater holes) to advance, and took command. I hoped to gain a footing in the enemy trenches and so hinder the machine gun fire. I was wounded 60 yards from the trenches, and the advance ceased 30 yards further on. I should like to congratulate the Newfoundland Regiment on their extreme steadiness under the most trying circumstances."

Although shattered and sundered as a Battalion, without a leader, they charged on the command, and to the guns that had destroyed their comrades and had broken all hope of success.

The rest of the day was a tale of the return of the wounded men, many of whom were rescued under the same terrible fire by our field am-

bulance corps, for the German practice is to destroy the wounded men as they lie on the ground, and the cool courage evinced by these so-called non-combatants was well worthy of their comrades in the fighting line.

Private Dewling, R. A. M. C., was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery and devotion on the 1st July, when he succeeded in rescuing eight of his wounded comrades under heavy fire in daylight, making several journeys over the fire-swept area. He also assisted with others in many night rescues. He was ably seconded by Private McGrath, who deserves special mention for five daylight rescues, while the general work of the R.A.M.C. and the stretcher bearers was so good that General Cayley paid high tribute to the fearless behaviour of our rescue staff and said that whenever he moved round the trenches on those fateful days he was sure to see parties of them carrying back wounded men.

Not one of the officers who went over the parapet returned unscathed, and only 68 men.

The reserves came up under heavy shell fire, and all that was left of the Battalion held on till the 6th July, when it was relieved, and left the trenches 168 strong, all told.

Sir Douglas Haig's message to the Governor of Newfoundland after the Battle of the Somme is worth recording. It was as follows:—

"Newfoundland may well be proud of her sons. The heroism and devotion to duty they displayed on July 1st has never been surpassed. Please convey my deep sympathy and that of the whole of our Armies in France, in the loss of the brave officers and men who have fallen for the Empire and our admiration for their heroic conduct. Their efforts contributed to our success, and the example will live."

The next scene of their fighting was in the Ypres salient after receiving a new draft of men, where they underwent the varying fortunes of war in raiding trenches and fighting in the craters which make No Man's Land more like a gigantic rabbit warren than the fields of sunny France under the cultivation of civilised man.

Our own record ceases on the 31st July with the transfer of our correspondent, Captain Frew, R.A.M.C., to Hospital work at Rouen, but a paragraph in the Press at the beginning of November brings the fighting record up to the beginning of last month.

Having been reinforced with the drafts originally intended for the 2nd Battalion, the 1st Battalion returned to the valley of the Somme, and again took part in the attack on Beaumont Hamel, the scene of their former desperate effort.

The Correspondent at Headquarters writes to the Press, after recounting their former attack on the same part of the Front:—

"Three months later (on October 12th) the Newfoundlanders had their second chance. The conditions now were more nearly even between the enemy and themselves. It was less than half a battalion at its normal fighting strength that now went into action over the parapet to clear a German trench 400 yards away. The trench was held in strength, and when the trench was

"ours there was hardly a Newfoundland bayonet which was not red with German blood; the trench was full of enemy dead, and those who were not dead were prisoners. Newfoundland has got her own 'back'."

There is no mention of wounded in the above paragraph, and even allowing for the journalists which would picture our boys as bloodthirsty, while we know them to be as merciful as conquerors as they are valiant in fighting, it is another fine record which entitles the Regiment to em-broider "The Somme" on their colours in memory of their bravery and as an other page in the history of the "Ancient and Loyal" Colony from which they set forth to fight the Nation's battles.

Turning to more peaceful and yet interesting scenes in the work of the Association, we may report the presentation of the colours to the Regiment by H. R. H. The Princess Henry of Battenberg on behalf of the League of Empire, and a silver shield, both the gift of the women and children of the British Isles.

The ceremony was splendidly arranged in the quadrangle of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, with a background of its ancient architectural effects and a foreground of over 100 of our own wounded brought from every available Hospital round London. The photographs give an excellent impression of the stately nature of the ceremony.

Miss Beatrice Chamberlain in welcoming Princess Henry of Battenberg made a speech which deserves to be recorded:—

"Your Royal Highness, "The women and children of the British Isles are grateful to your Royal Highness for accepting the mission of interpreting their feelings towards the men of the most ancient colony in His Majesty's Dominion; most ancient, and if there could be a first where all stand shoulder to shoulder, I would say, most loyal. This at least we may affirm, that the loyalty and devotion of Newfoundland to King and Empire are unsurpassed and unsurpassable. This smallest of the self-governing Dominions has freely sent to fight for justice, for humanity and freedom for the right and for King George every man she had of fighting age and capacity. Some are under the White Ensign, some have carried their regimental flags to honour in the ravines of far Gallipoli and the wasted fields of France. Everywhere they raise high the name of Newfoundland, and with the women and the boys and girls in the old country—we follow them with admiration and love, and carry the remembrance of their deeds in our hearts."

Princess Henry of Battenberg in the Presentation Address said:—

"It is with much pleasure that I am here to-day to present to you, the representatives of the Newfoundland Forces now fighting in the Great War, these Colours and Shield on behalf of the women and children of the British Isles. I am very glad to have this opportunity of seeing this fine body of men from your ancient Colony, which

"has already so nobly borne its part in the struggle. I hope that all ranks will accept my heartfelt good wishes for their well being in all they may be called upon to go through."

Financial.

As the Hon. Treasurer's Report will deal with the subject of the state of the Funds of the Association, it will be necessary to refer only to the current expenditure for the period under report, in order to explain the disbursements that have been made to carry out effectually the work of the Association.

It was stated in the Secretary's Report at the last Meeting of the General Committee in July, that our expenditure on the wounded men during the time they were in hospital and on furlough would average about £23 per man and that we should probably require a sum of about £1000 to meet the expenditure on the large number then returned as casualties from the Battle of the Somme. Owing to the generosity of Lord Rothmere and the Directors of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, who presented a cheque for that amount to the funds, with a direction that it should be spent freely on the men of the Regiment, we have been able to meet the increased expenditure without seriously depleting our normal balance, and we have been able also to spend more on the ambulance of the men in hospital near London and to add other items to the parcels for men at the Front.

The Mayo-Lind Fund has sent a large consignment over as a Christmas present, consisting of a packet of tobacco and cigarettes for every man serving in the Regiment, or the Naval Reserve, and the proportion for the Battalion has gone forward with the Christmas consignment of cakes and other luxuries.

The tobacco and cigarettes for the Regiment at Ayr will go out in due course, while the packets for the Royal Naval Reserve are being packed, and thanks to the prompt assistance of the Admiralty we hope to receive most of the addresses in time to forward the gifts to the men for Christmas.

About 500 have already gone forward, as no locality is given, and some of the ships may be at sea, either in home waters or in the Mediterranean. It is better therefore to avoid the congestion of the near Christmas postage than to endeavor to have them delivered on Christmas Day, although some will get their parcel in advance.

The packing of all these parcels of comforts has been done by a Committee of ladies headed by Mrs. E. R. Morris, and the transport free of cost has been carried on by the War Office through the Queen Alexandra's Field Force Fund, as before.

Storage for what is now a large stock of goods, and assistance in every way, is afforded by that Association since the formation of the Committee, and we have from time to time made a contribution to their funds in recognition of their valuable assistance.

Visiting.
The arrangements by which the wounded and sick in hospital are visited all over the United Kingdom have been mentioned before, and it will be gathered from the foregoing statistics that our Visiting Committee has had an extremely busy period from July onward to the present date. The members of the Committee have responded nobly to the call, and even new men are reported within a day or two of their arrival. By means of this up-to-date information we have been able to send a weekly cablegram to the Colonial Secretary of Newfoundland with the men's names tabulated under three headings: Progressing favorably, Improving, Slight improvement.

The cablegrams are confirmed by following mail, and by each opportunity batches of letters to relatives are also forwarded. By these arrangements the relatives are kept well informed of the progress of their wounded sons and brothers, and the Colonial Secretary has written that the information is much appreciated in the Colony.

The thanks of this Association and of the Colony are due to Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Morris and the other members of the Visiting Committee for their untiring efforts.

The present state of the members in hospital is:—
United Kingdom 200
France 60
Total 260

Prisoners of War.
Up to the present date we are cognisant of only three prisoners of war belonging to the Regiment, or the Royal Naval Reserve:—
Seaman Edwin Samson, who was rescued from the sunken Trawler "King Stephen," and Privates Barrow and Coombs, both of whom were reported after the 1st July, but were apparently made prisoners before the great advance. It is suggestive that after that effort we have been unable to find a single prisoner saved, out of the 170 missing. Efforts have been made through the United States Embassy, by the courtesy of the War Office, to ascertain if there were any more of our men prisoners in Germany or Turkey, but without result. A report came from the Colony that that there were three more prisoners, but on cabling to the original source of the Colonial information, the Queen Victoria League at Geneva, we received a reply that nothing was known of these men, and on tapping other sources of information on this subject such as the Red Cross and the Canadian Branch of that Society, and the St. John's Ambulance Society, the same answer was received—that nothing was known of these new prisoners of war.

Our Prisoners of War have hitherto been supplied with parcels of food by two Prisoners of War Societies, one for the Army and one for the Navy. We have periodical postcards from our men acknowledging the receipt of parcels from those societies, and in addition to that supply we have sent fortnightly parcels of biscuits, chocolates and milk from the Office. These also have been acknowledged.

On the 1st December all Prisoners of War Societies came under the control of the Central Committee, but the parcels will be packed by the same Societies as before, though forwarded through the official channels. The only difference is that Prisoners of

War will get three packets of food a fortnight instead of two as before, and the Association will subsidise the packing societies as before, but on an increased scale.

As to the future, the Committee will be glad to learn that the Battalion in France is to have a rest cure, while the new drafts now going out are training, and many of those that have been fighting on the Somme are coming over in batches on leave. We may thus hope to reduce our numbers of wounded, and commence the New Year under better auspices.

H. F. REEVE.

Major Jackson, M.C.

Yesterday Mr. John Jackson received a cable from Mrs. Jackson who is now in London, stating that his son, Capt. Alec, of the Royal Engineers, had been awarded the Military Cross accompanied with promotion to the rank of Major. We congratulate the young Major and his parents on his brilliant achievement.

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Here and There.
The opening meeting of the Jubilee Session of the M. C. L. L. takes place this evening. Topic, "Resolved—That war pensions should be paid according to the necessities of the veteran rather than to his Military Rank." Leaders: Messrs. Wm. White and A. E. Parkins.—Jan. 11

WILL JOIN CANADIAN NAVY.—A number of young men under the military and naval age have signified their intention of proceeding to Halifax to join the Canadian cruiser Niobe. As previously mentioned in the Telegram the salary paid a boy between the ages of 16 and 18 is 50c. a day and found. Should he have a mother depending on him for support she will receive an additional allowance of 43c. a day.

SEALS AT BAULINE.—We learn from residents of Bauline, C.B., that on New Year's Day three seals were seen in the water near that settlement. Happenings such as this often occur at this period of the year, and while some of the local prophets make an attempt at guessing the exact position where the seals will be taken the coming spring, experienced seal-hunters pay little attention to the occurrence.

RECRUITING SQUAD ON TOUR.—A squad of volunteers consisting of ten privates, two drummers, and two pipers under command of Lieut. H. Ross Sergt. J. Robinson, left by yesterday's train on a recruiting tour of Conception Bay. The first meeting was held at Holyrood last night with fairly good results. The party will visit all the important centres and will be absent for a considerable time. The speakers will be Lieut. Ross and Sergt. Robinson, assisted by clergymen and other prominent persons at the various settlements.

A rich, hot cup of INSTANT POSTUM with sugar and cream is a most delicious beverage.

Try it!—particularly if you are one of those with whom tea or coffee disagrees.

A dozen years ago POSTUM drinkers were comparatively few. . . Today, this table drink is served on railway trains, on ocean steamers, at leading hotels and restaurants, and millions use POSTUM instead of tea or coffee at home.

POSTUM has become popular because it is popular to be healthy.

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