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FOR THE EMPIRE'S CAUSE.

IN MEMORIAM.

HUNTER.—In loving memory of Fred Hunter, who died in camp on December 11, 1917.

Not dead to us, we love him still,
Not lost but gone before;
He lives with us in memory still,
And will for evermore.

—Inserted by his loving wife and wee daughters. 4430

"The Digger."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1920.

THE KING'S COLOUR.

The organisers of last Sunday's ceremony, when the Colour of the 2nd Battalion of the Otago Regiment was consecrated and left in St. John's Church until further required, are to be most heartily congratulated. It must have been a great pleasure for Lt.-Colonel Hargest, D.S.O., M.C., to see such a grand turn-out of returned men in response to his invitation to them to form the guard. And it was undoubtedly a treat for the people of Invercargill to see so many on parade It has been suggested by some civilian onlookers that the work of the returned men was markedly superior to that of the territorials who made up the balance of the parade. We think that this opinion is perhaps a natural one for the public to form; but as the official organ of the returned men themselves we take this opportunity of thanking the territorials for turning out in such large numbers, and of congratulating them on the manner in which they carried out their duties.

After every parade such as we had on Sunday last, one hears numbers of returned men saying that they wished they had turned out. It is to be regretted that every returned man does not make a special effort to attend these parades. In almost every case the parades are called either to do honour to our fallen comrades or to commemorate some glorious incident of the war. It is something of a disgrace to be absent on such occasions; and we hope that the example set by the few hundreds who paraded on Sunday last will be followed by thousands when we are called out again, probably on Anzac Day.

On behalf of returned soldiers "The Digger" thanks everyone who helped to make last Sunday's ceremony such a success.

The officers of Southland held a reunion dinner in the Federal Tea Rooms on Monday last, and spent a delightful evening with speeches, songs, orchestral music and yarns. The opinion was very freely expressed that the event must become an annual one, and we venture to suggest to the "other ranks" of Southland that these re-union dinners are good for all. It is contended by some that big fortunes have been made by many who avoided the war and stuck to business. This may be so, but these big fortunes cannot buy one fraction of the good fun and good fellowship that reign when returned men gather together for an evening. This good fellowship is our heritage from the war; far more valuable than gold or precious stones. We commend any function which brings returned men together and allows them to enjoy this heritage to the full.

That the soldiers are settling down and taking their place again in the civil life of the community was plainly to be seen at the Southland A. and P. Association's Show on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. In the jumping competitions, perhaps particularly, the Diggers were very much in evidence, and bits of the old familiar khaki uniform were much in demand. It is good to see the boys getting back into their stride in the sporting events as well as in the sterner and more commercial walks of life. The war has given us all a keener interest in the outdoor life. We have lived the life and know its possibilities. We have lived among animals—horses particularly, and now very few of us are "green" when we visit the shows. It should be good for us and good for the A. and P. Associations, and we predict that it will not be long before the experiences of Diggers at the other end of the world and the valuable information they picked up in their travels has some influence for good in the show life of our Dominion.

We all endorsed the remarks made by Mr Hall-Jones when extending on behalf of the soldiers a welcome to Sir Thomas Mackenzie, K.C.M.G., on Tuesday last. Every returned man who has spent time in hospital in England will remember with grateful thanks the informal visits to the hospitals made so frequently by Southland's distinguished guest. He brought with him an atmosphere of New Zealand. It was almost as good as a visit from our own parents or immediate friends. Whatever position Sir Thomas takes up in future he can be sure of the support of returned soldiers.

Mr Hall-Jones also referred to the glorious war record of Sir Thomas's family and Sir Thomas in his reply proudly claimed that the compliments paid to his children had been richly deserved. We share this point of view and we wish good luck and good fortune to them all. The ex-High Commissioner can be justly proud of the reputation he has made for himself and need not be at all surprised at the warmth of the welcome which has greeted him on his return to the land of his adoption. He has earned every bit of it.

The bachelors of Quarry Hills held their annual dance in the shape of a mask ball on Friday evening, December 3rd. They were unfortunate in regard to weather conditions, but, however, a fairly large gathering turned up to enjoy the fun of the evening, several people venturing from as far as Invercargill. Songs and recitations were rendered and dancing was carried on until well into the early hours of morning. This evening will remain a happy memory for some days to come, as all were unanimous that an enjoyable evening had been spent.

A big showing of handkerchiefs and gloves for Christmas trade. As these lines are always in great demand, we have laid in exceptionally large stocks, enabling us to offer these splendid values. The noted lisues handkerchief, in white and coloured borders, colours guaranteed fast, 1/3. Plain and embroidered handkerchiefs, hemstitched edges, 8d, 10d, 1/-, 1/11, 2/6. Dainty embroidered handkerchiefs, in boxes of 4 and 6 in muslin and linen, 4/11, 5/11, 6/11, to 21/- box. The new coloured and coloured bordered handkerchiefs, 8d, 10½d, 1/-, 1/3. Pure linen hemstitched handkerchiefs, 6½d, 7½d, 10½d, to 1/11. See bargain baskets of bundles of 4 and 6 at quick sale prices. Our stock includes all the best makes of gloves in kid, suede, and fabric. Satisfaction guaranteed. A visit of inspection we are confident will please at H. and J. Smith, Ltd., Progressive Drapers, Tay street, Invercargill, and Main street, Gore.

EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

One of the most outstanding facts about the N.Z.E.F. was its democratic spirit which while it made officers and men really brothers off parade, at the same time was never fully understood by our British cousins trained in the more exacting autocratic style of the army. Seldom did one find a N.Z. or Australian officer even remembering his official dignity when meeting an old comrade from "down South."

The latest example of soldier democracy comes from Wellington, where Inspector A. B. Charters, late Colonel A. B. Charters, C.M.G., D.S.O., C.O., 1st Battalion Otago Regiment), has resigned from the Education Department) to go on the land in partnership with his late groom of army days. This groom, George Sexton, well-known in Southland as an old Southland Rugby footballer of pre-war days, saw considerable service in France, where his qualities for endurance and reliability were sufficiently pronounced to induce the gallant Colonel to mark old George down for service "afies la guerre."

The scene of future operations of Charters and Co. is somewhere north of Auckland, near Whangarei, where Geo. Sexton and the Colonel will soon be well "dug in." All the old members of the Colonel's Battalion and all who knew both of these "Diggers" will wish them the best of luck in their new venture. The Colonel's knowledge of "strong points" and communication trenches, to say nothing of his expert understanding of what should be produced by the cooks, coupled with Sexton's army knowledge of transport duties, will all be very valuable in this new venture. Good luck to them and may this new democratic undertaking be as productive of good results as the other similar partnerships were in the War.

Last Sunday's proceedings when the King's Colour of the 2nd Battalion Otago Regiment was consecrated and deposited in St. John's Church, reflected great credit on all concerned with the arrangements.

Particularly did it reflect credit on the returned soldiers who turned out in such fine numbers to do honour to the memory of their old mates. This last was the sentiment that produced the parade and those who know what a difficult task was undertaken cheerfully by the men of the Guard, on Sunday, fully realised when they saw the fine steady march of these hundred men, that much more than ostentation caused the steady swing, the firm step and the lifted head. It was the memory of some old comrade perhaps on Gallipoli's rugged beaches, of one perchance now resting in Palestine, perhaps it may have been the thought of a brave old mate now lying "in Flanders fields"; at anyrate it was a proud yet reverent assembly that moved through our streets on Sunday.

The mounted escort led by Major Millard, and composed of men some of whom had ridden twenty or thirty miles to be present, lent a unique touch to the parade and added much to its imposing nature. The Guard of Honour of one section, sixty strong, composed of returned soldiers from every arm of the old Division made a particularly fine show and came in for a good deal of well-deserved praise. The left section of the Guard, 60 Territorials, voluntarily on parade, acquitted themselves very creditably and did not in any way let down their elder brothers. It was inspiring to see the Returned Soldiers and the Territorials working so keenly together, and it speaks volumes for the fine spirit of the local Regiment when we consider that so many volunteers were enthusiastically enrolled at one parade, to assist the Returned Soldiers if necessary to make the Colour party a success.

A most interesting part of the ceremony was witnessed in front of the Post Office, where at 3 p.m. the Colours were marched on. The parade then moved by way of Tay, Kelvin and Esk streets to St. John's Church, where the Colour was consecrated and deposited in the safe keeping of that institution.

The whole ceremony from beginning to end was highly impressive; and those citizens who witnessed the parade and saw the ceremony at the Church will not soon forget the solemnity of this fine ceremony.

It is no easy matter these days to turn out large military parades; for many obstacles, the chief of which is the returned man's natural modesty, which prompts him to shun the publicity of the post-war parade ground, combine to render it well nigh impossible to get a big muster; but Sunday's effort gave very great satisfaction to all who took part, and in the opinion of many officers well qualified to judge, the bearing and discipline of the Guard of Honour was finer than anything of its kind yet seen in New Zealand. The section of the Guard composed of Territorials are specially to be congratulated, in the first place for turning out voluntarily and in the second place for their good discipline which did much to make the whole parade a success.

The beautifully embroidered Colour—embroidered very generously by the Sisters of Mercy at Bluff—now repose in St. John's Church, a silent tribute to the imperishable glory won by those young New Zalanders, who, from the immortal 25th of April, 1915, until 11th November, 1918, died on service, that we might live with honour as a nation. This King's Colour which represents the thanks of the nation expressed graciously by His Majesty the King, means a great deal to every soldier of Southland and Otago, nay of New Zealand, but will it not mean even more to the kith and kin of our old mates who did not return.

A silent testimony to the sacrifices made by our young men, this Colour must always remind us of our duty to the memory of those departed heroes, and we should ever keep before us the ideal for which they died, an ideal which is well summed up in the cheering and unselfish words of a young and promising Otago officer who after gaining his commission on the field for consistent and fine work right from the landing was killed leading his men at Messines. Writing to his mother before that last battle he said, 'Mother, in Gallipoli days, I used to fear that we should somehow never beat the Hun, there seemed so much bungling, but now things are different, we have guns, ammunition, and men in millions, and we will win. For myself I care not, for my home and my ideals are safe."

On Monday night of this week, some forty officers representing almost every branch of the old N.Z. Division, met at the Federal Tea Rooms to fight again their old battles and pass a few interesting hours with song and story. The Chair was occupied by Colonel Hargest, who showed that he can direct the convivial barrage as skilfully as he can lead his men in battle.

"Digger" Duerden's orchestra was responsible for the musical part of the proceedings; and left nothing to be desired, several fine items being particularly well rendered. During the evening songs were rendered by Captain Webber, Rae and Major Rice, while considerable talent and experience were displayed by several officers present in the realm of after-dinner stories. One young staff-officer and a popular local medico was a particular favourite in this direction; and some of their stories bore evidence of years of close study of nature.

The toast list was a brief, but well-chosen one and besides the usual loyal toasts, paid compliments to the N.Z. Division, comrades of other wars, absent comrades, army, navy and territorials, and last but not least, the ladies.

Amongst the officers present were two New Zealanders (Major Gilkison, M.C., and Lieut. Macalister), who were during the war attached to British artillery units. These two gentlemen were able to speak of the New Zealanders from the point of view of the English officer, and their remarks were pleasing to those men who already were proud of a division which, it is claimed, was classed at the end of the war as a first-class division. The function altogether was a very great success and it was the opinion of all present that the dinner would in future be an annual event.

Southland Summer Show attracted visitors from all parts of New Zealand, and since glorious weather was experienced on both days, people from other centres are loud in their praises of our southern province. Despite the forecast by local Scotchmen, that the 100 per cent rise in entrance fee would be fatal to the attendance the grounds were packed and Wednesday was one of the first occasions on which the new grandstand was comfortably filled. The opinion was expressed widely on Wednesday amongst those well qualified to judge, that Southland this year has had the finest show of the year in the Dominion.

One was struck on entering the grounds by the extent of the space occupied by the parked cars of all makes and values. This was a good indication to visitors of the prosperity of Southland farmers.

Mr R. B. Caws is at present visiting Timaru to confer with the Timaru Aviation Company with regard to proposed commercial flying operations locally. Mr Caws is a "live wire," and possessed of ability in his particular line that renders him well fitted to organise such an undertaking as the above proposition. Certainly the "Digger" firm does not hesitate to "attack" schemes which in their opinion need only "push and go." Good luck to them!

Captain Dickson, the popular airman, who visited Invercargill during the winter, is coming here next week to undertake a