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FOR THE EMPIRE'S CAUSE.

IN MEMORIAM.

LAILAW.—In loving memory of George Laidlaw (Sixth Reinforcements), who died at Otautau on November 26, 1918.

"Gone, but not forgotten."

—Inserted by his loving sisters. 3670

"The Digger."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1920.

"THE DIGGER."

Owing to the resignation of our Editor, who is entering hospital shortly for further medical treatment, "The Digger" is now published, commencing with the present issue, under the direct control of the Management Committee appointed by the Invercargill Returned Soldiers' Association. We trust that the standard of the paper and its usefulness in the community will in every way be maintained. In the propaganda work of the Association, as in the case of the election of Mr Hargest to the Land Board, in making known the doings and the aims of the local Association and of Headquarters, in publishing questions asked in Parliament and all other matters relating to returned soldiers' affairs, and in keeping returned soldiers in touch with one another and with their Association, "The Digger" has proved itself invaluable. It is something more, however, than a returned soldiers' paper. Such an important centre as Invercargill which, with the adjacent suburbs of Waikiki and South Invercargill, is to-day the fifth town in the Dominion, requires and always will require a weekly paper of general interest. That this requirement is met by "The Digger" is amply proved by its large circulation among civilians both in the town and throughout Southland. This circulation is surprisingly high, exceeding beyond all measure the expectations of its promoters. The greater part of the matter of the paper details directly with the news and requirements of Invercargill and Southland, and to such institutions as the Southland League which have for their objects the progress and prosperity of the district we extend our hearty co-operation

and assistance. As an advertising medium "The Digger" affords exceptional advantages, and a glance at our advertising columns shows to what extent these advantages are realised by business firms, Government departments and local bodies. "The Digger," in brief, has established itself as a force in the community.

We draw the attention of our readers to a series of articles commencing in this issue and relating to incidents of the great war. The quantity of war literature which is being published to-day is so large—and so expensive—that few attempt to make its acquaintance. It is our object to sift the grain from the chaff and to serve up to our readers, Digger and civilian alike, a course of appetising incidents. For example, few of our readers know more of the Senussi campaign in Egypt than that the Rifle Brigade participated in the Battle of Mesra Matruh. Yet the examples we quote relating to the dashing exploits of the armoured cars read like a modern "Arabian Nights." In future issues we hope to quote some of Philip Gibb's criticisms of the British Army which aroused such a storm of controversy in England. We hope to quote also General Hamilton's diary concerning the tragedy of Suva Bay. Our object, frankly, is not so much to instruct as to interest our readers and those whose appetites are stimulated, we refer to the original works which are indicated in each article.

The voice of the sluggard is heard on the question of Mesopotamia. According to recent cables, America, in a recent Note, asks to be heard before the mandate under the League of Nations is finally granted over Mesopotamia. It took America nearly four years to come into the war and her delay in that respect is only equalled by her dilatoriness in making peace. We are not aware that any American blood was shed, or any American gold spent, or that American soldiers suffered, as the British did, intolerable hardships and agonies in liberating "Mesopotamia" from the tyrannies and misrule of the Turks. Persistently America, despite her war profits, has declined to accept a mandate over Constantinople, and has turned a deaf ear to the cry of the suffering Armenians, yet she casts a covetous eye on Mesopotamia with its rich oilfields. Britain to-day is spending 50 millions per annum in maintaining order in "Mesopotamia" and is well qualified to administer that country without interference from across the Atlantic. We well know that if Britain presumed to interfere with America's policy in Mexico she would quickly be told to mind her own business.

At the time of writing the poll of ratepayers is being taken on the Borough Council's proposal to raise a loan of £15,000 wherewith to build a column in the Victoria Park to commemorate the sacrifice of those soldiers of Southland who gave their lives in the great war. The meeting of returned soldiers which was held in the club on Monday last correctly reflects, we think, the general opinion of returned soldiers on the proposal. The attendance was small and returned soldiers undoubtedly feel that if Invercargill desires a memorial then the citizens should decide for themselves how such a memorial should be paid for. Of those who are interested the majority favour the proposal, realising that only by the proposed method can a handsome memorial be erected worthy of those it honours and worthy of the town itself. If the proposal is carried no ratepayer will grudge the small amount he will contribute annually to its cost; if the proposal is lost, and the citizens are disposed to drop the matter altogether, we are strongly of the opinion that the returned soldiers, with the assistance of their friends and well-wishers, should inaugurate a scheme to erect a suitable memorial to their fallen comrades.

A lovely display of Children's Spring and Summer Millinery in a host of useful shapes. Tagels in new shapes and styles, all shades, 5s 11d to 15s 6d. Plain straws, 3s 11d to 6s 11d. Crin hats with coloured under brims, 15s 6d to 27s 6d. Leghorns and fancy rush hats, 7s 11d to 25s 6d. Panamas, plain and trimmed, 7s 6d to 17s 6d. Henderson's straw hats, 15s 6d to 23s 6d. Black and white check hats, 3s 11d to 6s 9d. Tussock silk hats in large and small sizes, 4s 6d to 7s 11d. Poplin, Gaberdine, and pique hats from 2s 11d to 4s 6d, also a very dainty and extensive showing of infants' silk hats and bonnets. Fresh new stocks of children's dresses and coats. They offer excellent opportunities of securing your requirements at greatly reduced prices. Special displays in all departments for Christmas and holiday trade at H. and J. Smith, Ltd., The Progressive Stores, Tay street, Invercargill, and Main street, Gore.

THE EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

The province is keenly interested in the forthcoming consecration service to take place on Sunday, December 12. Preparations are well in hand and nothing has been left undone to make the occasion a memorable one in the history of the province.

As this is practically the last occasion on which a parade connected with the N.Z. E.F. will take place, it is hoped that a large parade of returned men will be seen on that day. A great many townspeople will be interested particularly in the guard of honour, for they have long hoped to see a force of returned men actually under arms. A parade of all soldiers willing to help will be held in the Drill Hall on Friday next, at 7.30 p.m., when Colonel Hargest will be present to meet those taking part.

Cricket locally has apparently been suffering a severe relapse from its victorious conclusion last year; for so far very poor results have attended the efforts of those who have been attempting to get together teams. Here, again, the long-obsolete Saturday-Wednesday half-holiday question militates against good cricket teams regularly taking the field.

At present several enterprising sports are busy having appended to formidable petitions the names of those citizens who favour a change to the more modern system of universal Saturday holiday. In the opinion of many, the old argument of the absence of country buyers under the new system is sufficient to paralyse their support.

The Returned Soldiers' Association, since its inception, has taken its place in public life and has performed cheerfully many the arduous tasks which come daily under its scope. Like Harrod's or Selfridge's in good old London town, the R.S.A. sets itself out to supply all the many wants of the returned soldier and never yet has the soldier gone away empty-handed from Mr Graham and his staff. Last Wednesday, however, brought a case which temporarily puzzled the staff, when a Digger, in great tribulation informed the local secretary that the "best man" in an important partnership contract had unfortunately been reported missing, and begged the assistance of the R.S.A. The necessary "second" was soon on parade, and despite the fact that this was the first time the "best man" had met the parties, we are told that the "knot" was securely tied. There are on record several cases where the bridegroom has been provided from the R.S.A. ranks, but not on such short notice as on this last occasion.

At the Federal Tea Rooms, on Tuesday evening a most successful dinner was given by the present members of the Battery to do honour to the returned ex-members of this fine battery. Major Lennie, C.O., of the Battery was in the chair, and besides the returned gunners, the guests of the evening included Colonel Hargest, D.S.O., M.C., Chaplain Captain Pybus, Capt. D. M. Rae, president R.S.A., Mr G. Cruickshanks, Hon. J. H. Hanan, M.P., and several other gentlemen. Fully 150 men sat down to a splendid dinner, and with a fine orchestra and a good toast list, the evening was one that gave enjoyment to all present.

During the course of the evening, Major Lennie was presented with a very handsome Morris chair as a mark of the esteem in which he is held and has always been held by the men of the battery. Past and present members spoke in eulogistic terms of the fine work done by Major Lennie, and all testified to the esteem in which this popular officer has always been held by the men under his command.

Some very interesting tales were recounted by the diggers of the red and blue pagaree; and many of these gentlemen showed that they could still register "good hits" as public speakers.

Many important toasts including, The King, Returned Members, Navy and Army, Kindred Arms, etc., were proposed and honoured, and after a very pleasant evening proceedings terminated at 10.30.

So well pleased were the ex-members with the hospitality meted out to them; that their representatives, who from time to time occupied the floor, voiced the opinions of their mates by hinting that the gathering should be an annual affair. To such good purpose did they spread their propaganda, that Captain McLean, on behalf of the Battery, promised that the function would be held annually, a decision which met with the approval of diggers and of the present gunners.

At one interesting stage in the proceedings a very well known and popular Main Body gunner appeared on the scene expecting to participate in a function of a rather more hilarious nature than the one then in progress. His nimble dive for cover on catching the eagle eye of his old bat-

tery commander, reminded his old mates of digger days, when one's life depended on the agility that was needed to sidestep one of Fritz's best 8-inch shells.

DIGGER'S LETTER BOX.

CONSECRATION OF THE COLOURS.

(To the Editor).

Sir,—The colours of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Otago Regiment have been deposited in the First Church, Dunedin, and on Sunday the 12th December next, at 3 p.m., the colours of the 2nd Battalion of our Regiment are to be consecrated by Bishop Richards and left in St. John's Church, Invercargill. The ceremony will be a military one, and I hope to see every Southland "returned man" on parade in uniform.

This is probably the last occasion on which we shall be asked to parade as members of the N.Z.E.F., and this final parade when we hand over our colours to the Church for safe keeping is surely an occasion when every man should turn out.

On Friday of this week I shall be at the Invercargill drill-shed at 7.30 p.m., and I shall be glad if as many returned men as possible will meet me there when I will explain the proposed ceremony for the 12th proximo.—I am, etc.,

J. HARGEST, Lieut.-Col.

We believe with Col. Hargest that this is a matter that should be taken up enthusiastically by all returned soldiers in Southland. Parades of this kind have always reflected great credit on our local returned men; and as the forthcoming ceremony is a parade to do honour to the glorious memory of our fallen brother Diggers, there is no doubt that the parade on Sunday, November 12, will be one that will long be remembered by Invercargill residents. "The Digger" takes this opportunity of congratulating Colonel Hargest on his graceful courtesy in arranging to have the King's colour of the 2nd Otago Battalion deposited in Invercargill. But for Colonel Hargest's interest in his own province, this Colour would have been deposited along with the other regimental flags in Dunedin.

On the last occasion on which a King's colour was paraded under guard through our streets, at the time of the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, many of the citizens were unaware of the real meaning of this important symbol; but on this next occasion it is hoped that civilians, realising what the flag stands for—the sacrifices of the fallen—will remove their hats as the colour is marched by.

Colonel Hargest may rest assured that in this coming function, he will have the unanimous support of the R.S.A., and we are sure that on Friday night he will find at the Drill Hall a large number of returned men ready to help him.—Editor, "The Digger."

NOTES FROM CALCIUM.

Industrial Unrest.—The feature of the week has been the restiveness of the dairy farming community. It appears that the trouble has arisen through the N.Z. Milk Products, Ltd., failing to continue the arrangement made at the beginning of the season regarding the carriage of milk. Many of the farmers have been to considerable expense providing equipment to give the Company a satisfactory commodity, hence their natural resentment at any attempt to vary the agreement to the disadvantage of the dairyman at this late period of the season. However, the latest report is to the effect that the managing director has stated that the Company will fulfil its obligations, so the joyful whistle of the cow-cockie will probably be heard breaking the morning stillness about 3 a.m. as of yore.

Sport.—Punters returned from Winton duly bent but not quite broke. The locally-owned Buller won and paid a good price. Though not extensively backed from this quarter our sports are all pleased to see the old sprinter back to winning form, and congratulate Mr McIntyre on his success with what any judges considered a back number. For the present our racegoers are laying up a little wad to dissipate at Invercargill about New Year time.

Work and Wages.—Shearing operations commenced at Messrs McNeill's property last week. The weather is too cold to make the conditions good for this work, and the shearers report very hard cutting. The wisdom of the A.P.U. in fighting for decent wages while prices were high is proved to-day. With the wool market in its present condition it would have been a difficult matter to make the squatter give his shearers either improved wages or comfortable quarters to live in.

Cost of Living.—Jubilant is expressed hereabouts regarding the penalty inflicted