

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY, SOUTH DUNEDIN

The annual meeting of St. Vincent de Paul Society, South Dunedin, was held at St. Patrick's School on Tuesday evening, July 20, Rev. Father Delany being in the chair. The annual report and balance sheet were read and unanimously adopted. Election of office-bearers for the forthcoming year resulted as follows:—President, Miss Cameron; vice-president, Mesdames Mullin, sen., and Nelson; secretary, Mrs. Hlade; treasurer, Mrs. Mullin, jun.; buyers, Mrs. Moloney and Miss Heffernan; wardrobe-keepers, Mrs. Lennon and Miss Brown.

The following was the annual report:—‘Your committee, in presenting their annual report, regret to chronicle, owing to the ravages of the war, there has been a continuous draw on their resources for goods and clothes, but we were able to cope with all demands, and we wish to extend our best thanks to all who assisted us during the year. During the year this society has been affiliated to the General Council at Bologna, and all members share in all indulgences attached to the work of the society. We held during the year twenty sewing meetings with an average attendance of sixteen. We would respectfully urge the members to try and get as many ladies as they can to come to the sewing meetings, as the future looks anything but bright, and the relief we can give in this direction is very welcome in some homes. The poor and sick have been regularly visited at their homes, and also the inmates of the benevolent institutions. Eight children were baptised, and a home found for one child. A donation of £3 3s, as usual, was sent to Mount Magdala, and a gift of fruit to the St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul. We entertained the soldiers that were in camp at Tahuna at a Communion breakfast, and we are deeply sorry to report that some of the brave boys that were at the breakfast have died fighting for their King and country. We wish to tender our sincere sympathy to their relatives and friends, and also to the friends and relatives of those New Zealanders who have lost their lives at the front. During the year there were 420 articles of clothing distributed, also 39 orders for coal, 104 for groceries, 10 for boots, 6 for meat, 2 pair blankets, sheets, and bed covers, etc. It will be seen from the balance sheet the society started the year with a credit balance of £42 15s 10d, to which has to be added subscriptions and donations (received during the year), £43 4s 3½d, making the total receipts, £86 0s 1½d. On the other side the expenditure amounts to £52 4s 11½d, leaving a credit balance of £33 15s 2d (cash in bank £29 1s 4d, and cash in hand £4 13s 10d) carried forward to next year. Our expenditure has increased on account of the extra help we had to provide, and also owing to the increase in prices of all goods.

BALANCE SHEET.

Receipts.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Balance in Bank, 1914				42	15	10
Subscriptions	40	13	3½			
Donations	2	11	0			
				43	4	3½
				£86	0	1½

Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Groceries	27	16	6			
Boots	3	18	9			
Coal	8	1	6			
Drapery	9	5	4½			
Sundries	3	2	10			
				52	4	11½
Cash at Bank	29	1	4			
Cash in Hand	4	13	10			
				33	15	2
				£86	0	1½

SIDELIGHTS ON THE WAR

A SOUTHLAND MAN AT THE DARDANELLES.

We make the following extracts from a letter by Mr. Clarence Ward, son of Mr. A. R. Ward, Five Rivers, Southland. It was written to his relatives from ‘somewhere’ in the Gallipoli Peninsula, under date, May 30. After referring to private and personal matters, the writer says:—

‘I intend going to confession to-night and to Holy Communion to-morrow, and as often as possible while I have the chance. I know you will be pleased that we have the opportunity of going to our duties within a few hundred yards of the firing line. I told you we had had a couple of bayonet charges under heavy rifle, machine gun, and shrapnel fire. The shells were bursting everywhere. Shrapnel is a terror, as when the shell bursts, the big round bullets fly about for hundreds of yards with a rather terrifying sound. The best plan is to lie down flat on one’s face, but even then you are very liable ‘to stop one,’ as the boys say. They make much worse wounds than ordinary bullets. On the second charge we were engaged in, our purpose was to get as close as possible to the Turkish trenches, and then entrench. We started off about 4 o’clock one afternoon. We had about 300 yards to cover before reaching the first of the trenches; needless to say we were pretty well puffed before half the distance had been covered, but I think the terrific hail of shrapnel helped to take some of our, by then, scanty breath away. I know I was ‘all out’ and not making four miles an hour when I reached haven No. 1. Then after a ten minutes’ rest we pushed on, but it was not so bad after that, as the rushes were shorter and there was more cover. We worked hard until well on into the night entrenching, and making ourselves safe for whatever might happen next day. This entrenching is generally working for our lives, and we lose no time about it. The enemy harass us as much as possible, but as the entrenching is always done under cover of darkness the casualties are not so heavy.

‘I need not say I felt scared for a while—horribly scared, and no one will blame me with bullets tearing up the ground a few inches away, and making ventilation holes in my coat and haversack, and chipping pieces off my rifle—a fact—until it became useless, and I had to get another one from a poor fellow who would never have any further use for it. On one part of my way the only cover I could see was a dead——. He was a huge fellow, fully six feet, and with a girth about twice the size he would own, too, when living. Well, there was nothing for it, so I plumped down on his leeward side. I had not been there more than ten seconds when a bullet hit him fair in the stomach and his ample girth began to slowly subside with an uncanny sound. I didn’t hesitate a second, but ran for it, and found more pleasant cover a score of yards further on. Finally, we got an order to entrench. I might say this attack took place at night. There was faint moonlight. After getting very close to the Turkish trenches—I could see the Turks, or part of them, quite distinctly—we set to work to dig ourselves in. However, the ‘Unspeakable’ kept up such a hot fire that we lost a good few of our men doing this. On Monday morning our battalion got the order to retreat, which we did, but owing to having hastily dug ourselves in the night before, through someone’s blunder, we neglected to connect our section with the main trench, consequently, when the main body retreated in the morning, no word came to us, so we were left on our own—seventeen of us. We afterwards found that about 200 of our men were further along to the right. We were on the left flank. On Monday four of our men were shot in our trench. Three were shot dead; the other lived for about five hours. Poor fellow he was shot right through the head. He lay with a merciless sun beating right down on him. Another got the top of his head nearly blown off with an explosive bullet, fired by a sniper behind us, but I won’t harass you with details. The machine guns were