

SAILORS' COMFORTS FUND.

The following letters have been forwarded for publication:—

Wakefield House,
32, Cheapside, London, E.C. 2,
June 11th, 1919.

Dear Mrs Nimmo,—

I am writing to thank you and all those members of the Women's Christian Temperance Association, New Zealand, who helped you, for the most magnificent contribution which you have sent for our mine-sweepers. The beautiful woollen clothing which you have sent will indeed be very, very useful, because for the rest of this year these men will be going out and attending to their perilous work, which is so necessary in the interests of our shipping.

We all feel that the comforts which are sent over by you are of the very best, and I can assure you that those you sent over last year have been of untold value to us, and have been appreciated more than I can tell you by the men to whom they have been given. The eight cases you have now sent are, I see, still full of the same magnificent gifts, and I can see that the spirit which has animated all those who have worked them, and you who have added to this by sending them so beautifully packed, has been that nothing is too good for our splendid seamen.

I think now that we have to remember that now that peace has come, they will still be required to go on bringing in all that we require to this country and taking our people from one part of the Empire to the other, and that they will still be facing the perils of wind and wave in order to do so, and we are determined that the magnificent heroism which our seamen have shown during the war shall never be forgotten, and that they shall feel that the women of the Empire are always going to look after their comfort and well-being, as well as they possibly can, and most certainly the members of your Union in New Zealand have led the way in sending such splendid presents for them.

Once more let me thank you very heartily, and ask you to convey this thanks to everyone of your members.
—Yours sincerely,

BEATRICE DIMSDALE,

President.

N.Z. Government Offices,
415, Strand, London, W.C. 2,
22nd March, 1919.

Dear Mrs Nimmo,—

I duly received Mr Nimmo's two letters of the 27th November and 24th December, and I only wish that I could have written you quite fully in time for your annual meeting, telling you how your gift has been used. However, I feel quite sure that you will understand that I have been very much occupied since the Armistice was signed, and it is only now that I am able to write you at any length; but I hope that you received my cabled message of the 27th February, in which I told you how much the gift was appreciated. I am now sending you a statement of expenditure, from which you will observe that most of the money has gone towards the relief of the members of the crew of the ill-fated Wairuna. It certainly was very providential that I was able to assist Mr Rees, second officer of the Wairuna, Mrs Mackenzie, stewardess of the Matunga, and R. Donovan, cook, Wairuna, for they landed in England practically penniless, after many trying months on board the Wolff as prisoners of war. Doubtless by now you have heard the full details of their story. Then, just about Christmas time, the remainder of our mercantile marine prisoners of war began to arrive, and although they were very kindly treated by the representatives of the owners of their ships, there were many little ways in which I could help the men to have a rather better time than would otherwise have been the case. Some of the men, of course, had their relatives in England, but others had no friends, or at any rate only knew people at a considerable distance from London. In such cases I thought it wise to assist the men to get away from the turmoil of the city, and I either paid the fares of the men to go to Scotland and elsewhere, or gave them money grants from your fund to enable them to do so. I can assure you that one and all have been very grateful indeed for the help that I have been able to give them through having your war fund at my disposal.

Mr Wray, who has been in charge of our Prisoners of War Department, tells me that ten of the crew of the Wairuna sailed for New Zealand the other day in the hospital ship Maheno, and they may arrive in Wellington even before you receive this letter.

The following are the names of those on the Maheno whose needs were attended to by us:—S.S. Wairuna: Engineer W. G. Campbell, Engineer Peter S. Isbister, Engineer W. H. Doherty, Steward A. Thompson, Fireman Alex. Patterson, Fireman Thomas Gillard, Fireman Geo. Baird.

There were three other Wairuna men on the ship, named Mitchell, Evans, and Livermore, but as I had no evidence whilst they were in Germany that they were New Zealanders, I had not sent them any parcels. Mr Isbister and Mr Campbell both stated to Mr Wray that they would call upon you to express their thanks for the kind gifts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and I hope very much that they will do so. I am sure that you will be very interested to hear the account of their adventures. I am holding the balance of your funds for the present, as there are still some repatriated mercantile marine prisoners of war who have not yet returned to New Zealand, but I should be glad to hear from you as to how you wish me to dispose of the remainder of the money when all have sailed for New Zealand.

I heartily reciprocate your fervent hope that a lasting peace may follow after this terrible war, for it is almost unthinkable that the fathers and mothers of our brave New Zealand lads should be again called upon to let their sons go forth to fight. Indeed, after losing so many of the bravest and best, I feel that another effort such as that which has been made would be more than one can contemplate.

With kindest regards to yourself and all good wishes to the Women's Christian Temperance Union.—Believe me, yours very truly,

THOS. MACKENZIE.

Mrs H. Nimmo,

British and Foreign Sailors' Society, Kent Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand.

Amount Granted from H.C.'s Comforts Fund to Prisoners of War, Mercantile Marine.

Debited to British and Foreign Sailors, £200—W. G. Hickling, ex Wairuna, £10; W. Carroll, £10.

Debited to War Distress Transfer, £200—Foreign Office, on account of R. Donovan, cook on Wairuna, £10 10s 3d; Agnes Mackenzie, stewardess, Matunga, £7 10s 11d; R. C. Matthews, fireman on Wairuna, £5; E.