

Bognor Observer, 8th March 1916, page 8

BOGNOR WAR WORKERS.

ACTIVITY AT THE CLARENCE ROAD DEPOT.

"THE WOMEN ARE SPLENDID."

Since its inception some time ago vast strides have been made by the Bognor Voluntary War Workers' Association, and on four days a week a certain house in Bognor is the scene of great activity, and a visit to this house will shew a number of ladies of the town hard at work turning out many and varied articles, all in the great cause. Someone has said "The women are splendid." This is true indeed.

It has frequently been stated that this is a war of endurance. That being so, the wise nation organizes its entire resources, and takes advantage of every available help; we in England may be thankful we have been sufficiently un-conservative to realize the valuable aid the women can render, and it is gratifying to know, are rendering. Of course, there is room for improvement, and the appeal for 400,000 women is not answered at once. Then must it be remembered that Kitchener's armies were not formed all at once, and woman has so persistently been told that her place is at home. Now we want her on the land, in the workshop, and in the hundred-and-one places vacated by her brother, who has donned khaki.

A representative of this journal visited the local war workers' depot at Sidlaw Terrace, Clarence Road, on Friday, and whether it was that the rain had kept some away or brought them into the workrooms, there was a considerable number of ladies in attendance, busily engaged in the manufacture of goods, that in the unfinished state looked very weird articles to mere man. Our guide was the genial general manager of the depot, Mrs. George Walters, who has entered into her assiduous duties with a zest that overcomes difficulties with a smile, and an inexhaustible store of energy that looks confidently into the future. To our query as to the number of workers, Mrs. Walters informed us they averaged ninety weekly. "but," she added, "of course, we hope to get more! Anyone who can needlework is wanted; for we can supply them with work." There is a charge of a penny a day for attendance, etc. "It's no 'classy' affair, though," emphasised our guide, who shewed us a spare room ready with furniture for additional helpers. First, however, we were shewn the office. This is on the ground floor, and quite business-like in appearance, too. Mrs. Walters exhibited pardonable pride in pointing out her own corner, where she keeps account of the state of affairs. She has the assistance of a number of ladies, who take turns, and the secretarial department is managed by Mrs. Lloyd.

Along one side of the room ran a bench groaning under the weight of many comfortable looking things that will be sure of a ready welcome in the hospitals. In addition to bandages—many-tailed, abdominal, etc., all neatly stitched up in little packets, separately, ready for sending off—were shirts, bed-jackets, slippers, capelins, muffets, etc., etc. The bed jackets seemed to be very well made. There was a pile of twenty-five shirts sent by Miss Humphry, and all made by her convalescent ladies at the Merchant Taylor's Home, so it will be gathered that everyone is doing their "bit," and in this connexion should be mentioned the work of the mothers' meetings of the town, for which wool is provided by Miss Leahy.

"We are under the direction of the War Office," explained Mrs. Walters, "from whom we receive instructions, which we carry out according to patterns supplied by them."

"When the goods are made," she continued, "we dispatch them to the County collecting office at Horsham. Nevertheless, we are entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions, and are grateful for every assistance. But the people of Bognor have been very good."

It should be stated that the premises are very kindly lent, rent free, by Dr. Conway-Cooke, and the town is not charging rates. Furniture has been lent by townspeople.

The general work room is supervised by Miss Thompson and Miss Edmund. Here our representative found several ladies busily employed, and all appeared quite pleased to be engaged in a work which, though of an unostentatious character, yet is of vital importance.

In the front room on the first floor the purely hospital requisites are made on two days of the week, and preparatory to this particular work the room is thoroughly scrubbed and sterilized. Great care has to be exercised in the making of bandages, etc. Three compact little contrivances fastened to the edge of a table were described as bandage rollers. Some of the bandages are of great length, and of course, must be rolled quite tightly. Mrs. Edward Harrison attends to the hospital requisites work, which is carried out on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and on the two following days slippers are made, when the room is under the care of Mrs. Wyatt. Different sorts of slippers are worked; for example, one kind will be very soft, and suitable only for ward use, while another would be supplied with cork soles, and may be worn in the grounds of a hospital. The war workers are nothing if not economical,

and a pile of snippings from bed jackets awaited incorporation in the slippers for the "Tommys." Wherever possible waste is avoided, and thus the output of the depot is increased.

All imports of raw materials, and exports of the finished articles are checked by Mrs. Walters, who receives invaluable assistance from Mr. Walters. All goods made outside, gifts, etc., are also received by her, with, it is scarcely necessary to add, gratitude. Down in the basement are the packing cases ready for the reception of the products of a truly interesting establishment. It should be noted that visitors are welcomed between certain hours, particulars of which will be found on reference to a notice outside the depot.