

Mid-Sussex Times 30th March 1920 page 3

MOTOR AMBULANCE SCHEME IN SUSSEX.

MR. F. H. WAYNE SAYS IT IS DOING A MOST USEFUL WORK.

MEETING AT HAYWARDS HEATH.

As many of our readers are aware, the British Red Cross Society is developing fresh activity in Sussex by means of the home service ambulance scheme. Its main objects are:—(1) To place a motor ambulance within a radius of not more than fifteen miles from every house in Sussex, ready at call to attend all cases of accident and illness requiring transport, at a very moderate scale of fees per mile. (2) To aid the Ministry of Pensions in conveying disabled sailors and soldiers to the various hospitals in which they require treatment.

Last Tuesday afternoon a meeting of the Haywards Heath and District representatives was held at the Parish Room, Church Road (by kind permission of the Rev. E. Cresswell Gee). Mr. GODFREY HOOPER (Commandant) presided, and a deeply interesting address was given by Mr. F. H. WAYNE (Assistant County Director for Sussex). The scheme, he said, was inaugurated last April with the idea of trying it for twelve months as an experiment, and he thought he could say it had been doing a most useful work—most important, perhaps, in the country districts. Of course they had had some stings, one of the greatest objections being that it was an experiment, but his answer to that was that life was composed of experiments! Others said they were not interested until they knew what other counties were doing. But suppose everybody said that! The thought was too terrible. The objections seemed so futile that they were hardly worth considering. His reply to them was to give the scheme a fair chance, and everything would go right. He admitted the scheme could be improved upon. Giving particulars of the work of the cars in Sussex, the different areas of which were shown by a coloured map, Mr. Wayne pointed out that cars had been placed in West Sussex at Chichester, Storrington (for Pulborough), and Horsham, while in East Sussex they were at Battle, Eastbourne, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. In addition, the Lewes and Brighton ambulance cars were co-operating in the scheme, so that every house in the county, with the exception of a small part of the Rye district, was within fifteen miles' access of a car. During five months the car at Eastbourne carried 449 patients and covered a mileage of 1,367; that at Horsham carried 29 patients and ran 715 miles in eleven weeks; 20 patients were carried and 135 miles covered in six weeks by the Chichester ambulance; while at East Grinstead, during a period of fourteen weeks, 50 patients were carried and 535 miles covered. The Haywards Heath car, which was only delivered in December, had already carried 25 patients and journeyed 432 miles. The statistics of the work of the cars were not records of joy-rides but records of magnificent service for the benefit of the community. (Hear, hear.) Haywards Heath was one of the first places which was decided on as a centre for a car, and he should like to pay a compliment to Mr. G. Hooper, Miss Cooper, Mr. T. Chandler and Messrs. Hampton, who had been the mainstay of the work locally. The speaker also dealt with finance, saying that no serious difficulties had arisen, and they were in no sense competitors with anybody. They were not out for profit or to compete with any garage man who cared to carry a case. One of the main objects of the scheme was to help necessitous cases. His thanks were due to the garage proprietors who had housed their cars free of charge. Offers had doubled the number of cars they had, which spoke highly for the garage proprietors, who were not in Sussex for their health, but for business. Mr. Wayne also referred to the Automobile Association's offer of the free assistance of their patrols, and also to the work of carrying disabled soldiers under the Ministry of Pensions. In conclusion, he urged his hearers to work whole-heartedly and in unity with those they worked with, and in doing good work they would find happiness.

General O'BRIEN (Buxted) proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Wayne for his able address. He had explained the scheme very carefully and told them their duty. He (the speaker) was sure each one of them in that room had only the one idea, and that to make the scheme a success in their own district. They wanted the scheme in its entirety to work for the good of the community, and if this were done the small places would benefit accordingly. (Applause).

Thanks were passed to the Rev. E. Cresswell Gee for the use of the room and to the Chairman for presiding, and in this way the proceedings closed.