

Worthing Gazette 31st March 1915 page 6**READY FOR HOME DEFENCE!****The New Movement.****Formation of a Volunteer Training Corps.****What a Public Meeting Decided.**

The Duke of Norfolk, in his capacity of Lord Lieutenant of the County, has taken an active part in the formation of Companies of the Volunteer Training Corps. These Corps are now being formed throughout the County, superseding the Civil Guards, which failed to gain recognition from the War Office. Locally the Civil Guard died a natural death on Wednesday evening, and there came into being a unit of the Sussex Volunteer Training Corps.

The Mayor (Alderman J. White, J.P.) was responsible for convening the meeting, which was held in the totally inadequate—and antiquated—Town Hall, the men of the borough being summoned to attend through the medium of an advertisement in the GAZETTE and large posters which were distributed on the hoardings throughout the town.

The Mayor and His Supporters.

The Mayor presided, and carried the meeting through in commendable time, the gathering lasting less than an hour. Supporting his Worship were Colonel Money (the Military Adviser for the Parliamentary Division of Lewes), the Ex-Mayor (Alderman R. Piper, J.P.), Colonel Vansittart (Commanding the Eighth Battalion of the West Kent Regiment), General Eastman, Mr. H. Hargood, J.P., Mr. E. G. Amphlett, J.P., Mr. E. C. Patching, J.P., Councillor W. Sams, J.P., and Mr. E. L. Hadfield.

In the absence of the Town Clerk (Mr. J. Kennedy Allerton), through indisposition, the Mayor had the assistance of Mr. Percy Smallman (Chief Committee Clerk).

The MAYOR said he did not intend to make a long speech upon them, but there were just one or two points he would like to put to the meeting. There were many able-bodied men, capable of doing something to help their country, but who were not able to take up their places.

In the Fighting Line.

The Home Defence Force was formed for men who might be able to take the places at home of those who could go, thus releasing more men for foreign service. Let the cry be "Men, and yet more men!" so that by a flood of men the enemy might be overcome (applause). He did not think that the men of England had yet realised the situation. Had they done so they would not have had the working man going on strike for an extra farthing an hour, and the employers taking steps to increase their already large profits. They must now do everything that lay in their power to repulse the foe, and that could be done if England rose in her might. The War could not be won by their singing "Rule Britannia" and "Britons never, never shall be slaves!" If any of them had that idea, let them.

Get Rid of It At Once.

It had been said that if the enemy did land on these shores they would all be prepared to have a slap at them. That was where the danger lay, for they might be sure there would be retaliation. He would appeal to them to let the slap be an organised slap, and a good resounding slap, and one that came from men who were recognised combatants (applause). With regard to the Volunteer Training Corps, which they were assembled together that evening to consider, it had been decided to take the Parliamentary Divisions in this County for the formation of Battalions, and the Corps would be recognised by the Government as a part of the Military Forces of the Crown. It would be under the direction of a Military Adviser, and Colonel Money, the Adviser for this Parliamentary Division, was with them that night. The Corps, it should be understood, was for Home Defence only, and would only be open to those who could not join the other Forces through being debarred by physical disability or other causes which would have to be

considered. There would no doubt be some talk as to the

Provision of a Uniform,

but he was going to suggest to them that that for the present was only a secondary consideration. First of all they required the men to be trained and disciplined, and then they could begin to talk about uniform and equipment. They must not imagine that this was going to be a loophole of escape for any who were capable of serving at the Front (hear, hear). No man of Military age could be enrolled unless he gave an undertaking to enlist when called upon to do so. They must not imagine either that this was going to be a game of playing at soldiers.

Colonel MONEY moved the following resolution :

"That, in the opinion of this public meeting of men of Worthing, it is desirable to form a Worthing Company of the Sussex Volunteer Training Corps, and the meeting pledges itself to use every means in its power to further this object."

He remarked that the inauguration of the Voluntary Training Corps was really a movement to legalise the Civil Guards and other similar forces which had been formed

For Home Defence.

As these Corps came into being they would become affiliated to the Central Association, and by this means they would secure War Office recognition, and so become a part of the regular Forces of the Crown. If sufficient men joined at Worthing it would become the headquarters of a unit, and the surrounding places would send their quota here to take part in the drills. It had been said that the conditions of joining did not give sufficient encouragement, but they had to remember that Lord Kitchener had a big task in hand in forming his New Armies, and he was anxious that men of Military age should not be included, and they must be careful to exclude any men who ought to be in the Army. There were signs of this Force being welcomed as a great asset to the strength of the country, and people were beginning to realise that every man must be brought to play his part.

The motion was seconded by Mr. E. L. HADFIELD, who said they could not realise that the struggle was so great unless they had lost some of their beloved ones. They had an example of

What Should Be Done

when they bore in mind how the younger generation went from this town and the country villages around when the call was made. They recently had a disaster in which one of their Lifeboat men lost his life, and the fact came close to them all, and put them in mourning for some days. If they wanted victory on the battlefield they must all be prepared to do their duty. One of the conditions of this Force was that it was only for men over thirty-eight years of age, or for those who were physically incapable of enlisting in the Army, or those engaged in carrying out Government contracts, and men employed in Municipal contracts and such works as Gas and Electricity undertakings. But if any man of Military age did join that Force, it was on the understanding that he was prepared to serve in the Army when called upon to do so.

Colonel VANSITTART said he was glad he came to the meeting at the invitation of the Mayor, for he was able to see

The Earnestness

which Worthing had taken, and was still taking, in the question of National Defence.

The resolution was agreed to.

Mr. A. BUCKLAND DIXON then moved :

"That an Executive Committee be appointed to carry out the objects of the meeting, and that it is desirable the Committee should consist of five members to be nominated by the Civil Guard, and five other gentlemen willing to serve."

Such a Committee, he said, should be small and not unwieldy. It was proposed that five should be nominated by the Civil Guard, and there should be five others whose names would have sufficient weight, and assure everybody that they were not playing at soldiers, and that they would be doing everything to make themselves fit. The Civil Guard was that night

Dying a Natural Death,

but he hoped it would live again in the Volunteer Training Corps, and he hoped every member of the Civil Guard would join. Those whom he proposed were General Eastman, Lieutenant-Colonel Maltby, Major Prickett, Rear-Admiral Fleet, and Mr. H. B. Constable, with the Mayor as President of the Corps.

Alderman PIPER, in seconding, said that Worthing had done remarkably well with regard to both men and money, and he was sure now, when they asked for a Corps to be formed for Home Defence, that Worthing would do well over this.

In reply to Mr. P. J. LE RICHE, the MAYOR

said that they would take in all those whom he rejected under a medical examination :

Mr. LE RICHE having expressed the opinion that those who joined the Corps should submit themselves to a medical examination.

Mr. Dixon's motion was agreed to, and with the passing of votes of thanks and the singing of the National Anthem, the proceedings concluded.