

THE LOCAL RELIEF FUNDS.
Present Position.
Interesting Facts Concerning the Belgian Refugees.
Some of Them Employed Locally.

It was regrettable to hear, at a meeting of the War Relief Committee at the Town Hall on Wednesday evening, that certain persons who have made promises of subscriptions to the Fund in public have not redeemed those promises. On being appealed to as to what could be done, the Town Clerk (Mr. J. Kennedy Allerton), who has acted as Honorary Secretary to the Fund, said he was afraid there was nothing to be done; and he further stated that he had no great hope of the promises being fulfilled, for several letters had been written without effect.

Those who put in an attendance on Wednesday—they were few compared with the number constituting the Committee—found little awaiting them, and the proceedings were more or less of a formal character. There was a discussion as to how

The Belgian Refugees
 who are now the guests of the townspeople occupy themselves, and this proved interesting; whilst it was resolved that in future the Committee should do away with their monthly meetings, and assemble about once in every three months, unless important matters arise meanwhile which will demand their attention.

The Chair was occupied by the Mayor (Alderman James White, J.P.).

Alderman J. G. DENTON, as Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee, in moving the adoption of the proceedings of that body, explained that they had in cash about £1,338, out of which amount, as they were aware, a sum of £1,000 was sent to the Prince of Wales' Fund, and the amount at present in hand totalled £1,559 13s 5d. There were a few subscriptions not yet paid, but he took it that they were all good. The amount was £37 7s.

The TOWN CLERK: There is not much probability of getting them in, and I think it would be ungratified to again approach those who have made the promises. Several letters had been written to them.

Alderman DENTON: Well, I am rather surprised that people should make promises in public and then not keep them!

The Present Payments

The MAYOR observed that at the present time they were not expending very much, for it was only a little over £10 a week that they were having to pay out. This was on account of the separation allowances being increased, and he hoped that they would soon be able to stay their expenditure, though he would not be astonished if they had some Civil distress. He hoped they would be able to husband their resources against that time at the end of the War, for they could not say what claims would happen to be made upon them. There was a good anticipation that they would have a fairly good lump sum in hand to meet the expenditure. Referring to the cost of the administration of the Fund, his Worship said that it was only thirty-five shillings a week, and he could say that the money was well

earned. No one but the Committee knew what work was involved, and the sum expended hardly represented the work, which was not to be judged by the fact that only some £10 was expended in relief. The Finance Sub-Committee had been asked to go into the matter, and more would be heard of it later.

Extent of the Work.

Alderman DENTON pointed out that the sum of thirty-five shillings which had been mentioned by the Mayor included the work that was done on behalf of the Belgian Fund, and in addition to the inquiries which had to be made on behalf of the Government in various matters.

The TOWN CLERK pointed out that the work involved the collection of the money, for a series of applications had to be made. The cost of a Committee Clerk for twenty-one weeks was £36 18s., and the percentage on the amount that had been expended worked out as low as two and a quarter, and that did not take into account the Belgian Fund or other matters.

Councillor J. F. WYTHE, as Chairman of the Distribution Sub-Committee, stated that the amounts that had been granted since the Committee last met were, for the first week, £36 18s.; for the second, £33 8s 3d.; third, £31 7s. 9d.; and fourth, £11 16s. 6d. The big drop was accounted for by the fact that the increased separation allowances had become operative on the 1st of March. He thought they had got to the basis of their expenditure now for some time, or, at least,

Until the Soldiers Went Away.

The number of cases relieved during the past week totalled eighty-one; and with regard to Civil distress, a sum of £6 15s. had been expended during the month. They had not had a great number of Civil cases to deal with. The sum of £11 15s. 6d. did not represent the great amount of work that had to be done, for there were a great number of cases that came before them, and there was also an astonishing amount of correspondence to be dealt with.

Councillor NEAL said that he thought the Fund was administered most economically. The reports of both Committees were adopted.

The Belgian Refugees.

As Chairman of the Belgian Relief Committee, Mr. A. BUCKLAND DIXON gave an account of the work that had been done by them. Out of the fifty-two refugees that they received fourteen had gone, leaving the Committee with thirty-eight. Twenty-two were at Salsley Lodge, and the rest at other places. The Fund had amounted to £738 18s. 1d., and out of this maintenance had absorbed £440 11s. 1d., and there remained in hand £298 7s. This was not taking any account of a sum of £9 11s. not yet paid. They had enough money in hand for nearly fifteen weeks' further maintenance.

The MAYOR said that they had some able-bodied men here who should be working, and he had a notion that some of them ought to be fighting. Of the males, there were two of the professional class, three clerks, one telegraphist, one jeweller (and a woman skilled in the same trade), one cabinet maker, one colour shop worker, and one tailor. Of these one was now employed as

A Market Gardener.

one was working at his trade as a tailor, and one of them was working in an oil colour shop. Could Mr. Dixon tell them whether the Committee had received anything from these men; what arrangements were made with those in receipt of wages; did they contribute anything towards their keep?

Mr. DIXON said that those earning enough did do so. Here at Worthing they had quite a different class of refugees from those mentioned by the Mayor (his Worship had referred to refugees at Bradford), for most of them were shopkeepers from Antwerp or the neighbourhood. One of the men now engaged by Messrs. Barwell, potting plants, was a master man who had had a large business near Antwerp. He thought that was very creditable (hearty cheer). There were three men, clerks, for whom no occupation could be found, for they were not sufficiently well acquainted with the language. They were presumably eligible for the Army, but the Committee had not been able to persuade them to go, and apparently there was no means at present of

Compelling Them To Go.

It was all to the credit of those refugees who were at work and receiving wages that they were contributing to their maintenance, and so relieving the Fund to some extent. One man, however, was unable to contribute, for he was only earning a small amount; he was learning motor driving, and the Committee thought they would let him have the few shillings for his pocket.

The MAYOR: It is to their credit that they contribute towards their keep.