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DISAGREEMENT IN GALGATE.

COL. DOWLING AND CR. TOWNSON WALK OUT OF RURAL COUNCIL MEETING

The otherwise equable monthly meeting of Barnard Castle Rural District Council on Wednesday, December 23rd, was regrettably marred when two members, Col. Dowling and Cr. Townson, felt impelled to leave the Council chamber on a point of order.

Cr. C. W. L. Robson presided, with Mr T. W. Bainbridge, Clerk.

A Difference of Opinion.

"All right!" It was with these words that Col. Dowling left the Council chamber, followed by Cr. Townson, whose good intentions, as brought to Council's notice through a Works Committee report up for acceptance, had caused all the trouble.

The Works Committee report had noted complaints by Cr. Townson that, on November 5th and 11th, he had observed some Council road-workers and a hired owner-driven lorry doing other than Council work in the Council's time. In regard to the first complaint, the committee recommended that the Surveyor should instruct road foremen that no work other than roadwork should be done during the Council's working hours, and, whilst reprimanding them, tell them it must not occur again. As regards the second complaint, the committee recorded the Surveyor's report as satisfactory, and they had also accepted his explanation in the case of a third.

The Surveyor had read a statement from the road foreman concerned, and on all points the committee recommended that the whole of the Surveyor's report be accepted and that he be given all possible support by the Council in the execution of his duties.

Col. Dowling took exception. The matter had been dealt with at the Works Committee meeting and an objection was raised at that meeting that a councillor had no right to speak to a workman in the course of his work, as it was contrary to standing orders. His study of 14 orders had failed to substantiate that. In his opinion any Council member was right in speaking to any Council workman whom he thought was not doing his duty. The men had been whitewashed and the Councillor sat upon. It was absurd to suggest that men employed by the Council never wasted time. Everyone at some time or other had seen some of the men loafing, and he felt that the ratepayers' money should be looked after.

Cty. Cr. Liddle said he was responsible. According to Standing Orders intrusion by Councillors on jobs was taboo. No one was perfect, but he had never seen any of the Council workmen loafing and he knew the district as well as anybody.

Cr. Anderson said he knew of a case where a man took time off and returned drunk! Cr. Scott said in that case the man should have been reported. He also thought that to talk about loafing was absurd. The Cr. was not right in interfering with any Council workman, but should have reported him to the Surveyor, who could then have questioned him. The Surveyor alone had that right. He doubted whether any councillor knew the plan of the work being done and he hoped they would sit on any councillor in future who acted in such a way.

The Clerk then read the Standing Order, the prohibitions in which covered entrance upon council premises, work being carried out by the council, and issuing instructions to workmen without authorization.

Colonel Dowling said it was on the highway, where anybody had a right to speak. Cr. Townson committed no breach of the Standing Order and issued no instructions to workmen.

Cty. Cr. Liddle said that to interfere with any workman was wrong, and Cr. Townson denied that he had spoken to the men. He merely conversed with a road foreman after he had passed the men, to substantiate his allegation.

Col. Dowling moved deletion of the committee's final recommendation.

Cr. Dickinson moved the adoption of the whole report.

A vote was taken and, on it proving equal, the Chairman gave his casting vote in favour of Cr. Dickinson's motion, which was carried.

At this Col. Dowling asked whether it meant that a councillor must not speak to a man on the road.

The reply was, not so far as his work was concerned.

"Then," declared Col. Dowling, "I will not belong to a body that adopts such an attitude!"

On Cr. Liddle pointing out that the Standing Order had always been in existence, Col. Dowling retorted, "All right!" and left the Council chamber with Cr. Townson.

Explanations called for.

The chairs of Crs. Hutchinson, Maddison, and Peacock were again empty, as they had been for more than six months, thereby creating casual vacancies on the Council. Accordingly the Clerk was instructed to write asking for explanations.

Evacuation Matters.

Dealing with evacuation, the Clerk said there were 249 evacuees in the area, a decrease of 14 on the month. The Ministry of Health was pressing for recovery of contributions. There was a questionnaire regarding 31 persons, and he asked for a meeting of the War Emergency Committee to be called. This was agreed to for the date of the next committee meetings.

Headlam Hall Sick Bay Open.

A letter from the Ministry of Health was read by the Clerk stating that Headlam Hall Sick Bay was now open for cases.

Salvage News.

The Salvage Committee reported that Mr Thompson Grieve had been appointed a temporary salvage officer for three days at a salary of £4 per week. In his report, Mr Grieve stated that Mr Bert Lee had had another successful drive in Upper Teesdale. He had arranged a weekly collection of bones from butchers in Middleton-in-Teesdale. Collections this month had been 4 tons paper, 2½ cwt. bones, and 4 tons rubber, amounting to £42 15s. The report was adopted and the appointment of a scrutinizing committee in connection with the impending book drive was suggested.

Cr. Broumley said that last Saturday he had gone through three tons of books at Staindrop and not one book was worth keeping. The matter was referred to the War Emergency Committee.

Thoughtfulness for Ratepayers.

With regard to direct scavenging, the Clerk reported that he had received a Ministry of War Transport Licence to acquire one Karrier Bantam refuse collector for £567 10s. If this vehicle was bought that would make two Bantams and two Scammells in the rural district, and permission had been obtained to buy a third Bantam.

Cr. Broumley moved that the third Bantam should not be bought, not that he had anything against the scheme, which was most successful and reflected credit on those who had devised it, but because rates were high enough already. He thought they should rest content until after the war.

Cr. Nodding urged the widening of the scheme and was in favour of getting the third Karrier, which might not be obtainable later on.

Asked the scope of the scheme, the Clerk replied it was for four vehicles, and the Council had four.

Cr. Robinson pleaded consideration for the poorer ratepayers, who were being very hardly hit.

Cr. Scott thought three vehicles would have sufficed, but Cr. Hind felt otherwise. He was in favour of a fifth being got as he felt that now was the time to have high rates and get things paid for.

Cr. Liddle said that was a personal opinion and not the opinion of the committee. Cr. Hind represented.

Cr. Nodding submitted that direct scavenging would reduce the rates.

The Clerk said the permit was valid for one month only.

Cr. Broumley agreed to limit his period to a twelvemonth, and his motion was carried.

Contractors for various districts have been asked whether they will continue for a further twelve months at present rates.

One Application for Vacant Post.

The Clerk reported that for the position of temporary Sanitary Inspector only one application had been received, from Mr S. V. Morris, aged 42, who had excellent references.

Cr. Appleby, confident that the war will end in March, moved that the question of appointment be deferred until then, but nobody seconded, and it was agreed that Mr Morris be interviewed on December 30th at a special meeting of the Council.

Reports were submitted on the Wings for Victory Conference and the conference on Reorganisation of Local Government by Cr. Nodding and Cr. Scott respectively, and in his Cr. Scott said County Councillors present felt there must be some change.

One Bus Stop Less for Toft Hill.

The Clerk reported that the Regional Transport Commissioner had approved a reduction of bus stops at Toft Hill from four to three.

Cr. Scott submitted this would be unfair to the Hamsterley Bus Service as it would cut them out of about half of Toft Hill.

Cty. Cr. Liddle thought otherwise, though he was not for the Regional Commissioners' decision. The bus proprietors' attention should be called to it.

The Chairman promised that inquiries would be made, and it was reported that the Bishop Auckland—Hamsterley Sunday bus would be allowed to pick up passengers at Toft Hill.

After Cr. Broumley had been appointed to represent the Rural District Council on the Rotary Club's Blood Donor Scheme Committee, the Chairman paid a tribute to Mr J. E. Wren, and it was agreed that the Council's appreciation of his reports of their meetings whilst editor of "The Teesdale Mercury" should be conveyed to him by letter.

THE CHRISTMAS ROUND.

HAPPY TIMES AT THE E.M.S. HOSPITAL AND INSTITUTION.

GOOD CONGREGATIONS AT THE SERVICES.

Welcome peace and calm brooded over Barnard Castle on Christmas morning, a calm and a peace that seemed enhanced by the pealing of the church bells once again. What all fervently hope will be the last wartime Christmas for many a year, if not for all time, was as much like the Christmases of happier years as could be in these days.

With much to be thankful for, the services in the various churches were well attended, the masses at the R.C. Church, celebrated by the Rev. Fr. J. McKeown, being crowded. Incidentally, the blackout difficulties did not prevent the customary midnight mass of the Catholic Church from being celebrated on Christmas Eve. It was celebrated by the Rev. Fr. W. Warmbold at the Chapel of Thorpe, near Wycliffe, the residence of Mrs Hawksley. Nearly 200 members of the Forces were present, and these were afterwards entertained at tea in the new Catholic Club on the Bank. It was only by dint of very hard work that the Club could be got ready in time. There were a number of willing helpers at the party, and one of them, Mrs T. Parkinson, had the misfortune to slip on some steps and break her wrist. Her friends will join in wishing her speedy recovery from her accident with the strength of her wrist unimpaired.

All four celebrations of holy communion at the Parish Church were well attended, and there was a large congregation at the carol service on Sunday evening.

Some few families were fortunate enough to have loved ones home on Christmas leave from the Forces. Others who had empty places at their tables had, perforce, to content themselves with remembering absent ones. We feel sure our readers will join with us in wishing for all such, "a safe journey" and "a happy landing" once again amongst their own folk.

Those who, though in our midst yet were not of us, were not left out in the cold. Christmas 1942 at the E.M.S. Hospital and in the Institution was a very happy one. In fact, nowhere else in the town can it have been passed more in keeping with the old traditions of good cheer and good fellowship. The staffs and inmates at both places were just big happy families. The hospital patients were early reminded that it was Christmas Day. On waking they found long white stockings hanging on their beds well filled with such good things as cigarettes, shaving soap, books, and toys. What joy the staffs of institutions and hospitals everywhere seem to take in ministering to those under their care at Christmastime! The staffs at Barnard Castle's E.M.S. Hospital and Institution, both nursing and domestic, vied with each other in good works—irrespective of their grades, and in these they received grand aid from outside friends, amongst whom were the Durham and Northumberland Miners' Welfare Committee for Services Cases, whose donation of £2 4s. provided cigarettes, and members of the Corps of Royal Engineers, whose variety entertainment was a notable contribution to the Christmas fun. It would have to be a very untoward occurrence that would prevent Cty. Cr. Singer, J.P., from putting in a busy Christmas day of well-wishing. It was no surprise, therefore, when as chairman of the Public Assistance Institution Committee, he, with the Master, looked in during the morning and wished everybody the best of good times, and the patients a speedy recovery.

Amongst the gifts that must be recorded were: 40s. for the Hospital Comforts Fund and books for the library from Gunner

Robinson; 6s. each for the Hospital Comforts Fund from Sappers Clay and Newton and Cpl. Haggerty; cider and lemonade from Cpl. Kuttner; a scarf as a whist drive prize from Private Rex; shaving soap and cigarettes from Miss Scott; cakes from the nursing staff; holly from Miss Redfern and holly and a Christmas tree from Miss Gibson.

The dining rooms and the wards were brightly decorated, and both in the hospital and in the institution the Christmas fare, including roast beef and Christmas pudding, was of the best and without stint. The inmates of the institution lacked nothing in the way of liquid refreshment and smokes. The hospital patients were greatly cheered by visits, during the morning, by their Colonel and officers, who brought gifts. Those able to do so rose for dinner, to which they sat down at noon in company with the nursing staff. Patients unable to rise were far from forgotten, however. Jellies and custards were provided for them and their dinner was served first.

Dr. Bower, the Medical Officer, who carved the roast beef, had obviously done so before, and with beer and cigarettes for the patients, provided by the Public Assistance Institution Committee, and cider and lemonade for the nursing staff, thanks to Cpl. Kuttner, dinner was a great success.

Community singing was heartily engaged in during the afternoon, and a warm greeting given to Major Neve, the Medical Registrar, who, with Mrs Neve, called with good wishes and stayed to tea. The variety entertainment by the men of the R.E. Corps in the evening was a real treat, and the nursing staff showed their appreciation by entertaining the performers at supper, along with the patients, who, through Major Lloyd, one of their number, also expressed thanks. Like the domestic staff, the nursing staff had been untiring throughout the day, but they were well looked after by their sister-in-charge, Miss Howard, R.R.C., who would like to thank all friends for gifts.

The carol-singing that closed Christmas Day did not bring Christmas to an end. The Vicar, the Rev. B. Selwyn Smith, M.A., celebrated holy communion in the hospital north wing on Saturday morning, and it was not until after an enjoyable whist drive in the evening that once more the hospital assumed its usual aspect. Taken all round, Christmas 1942 in Barnard Castle E.M.S. Hospital and Institution will be as happily remembered as any Christmases that have gone before.

Poets' Corner.

THE DYING YEAR.

Soon on this year shall night's last curtain lower,
How soon through endless space we'll listening hear
Big Ben commence within his giant tower
To time the changes of another year.
Die, waning year, like man's unconscious corpse,
Time hast prepared for thee somewhere a tomb,
Wrapped in thy shroud of shams and perished hopes,
Unseen time's pen shall sign thy certain doom.
Oh would the gods on man good influence pour
And in his mental lock turn wisdom's key;
Sweet doves of peace would wing from shore to shore
Could self and racial hatred die with thee,
The tide of strife would cease the mind to flood,
Biology taught early, broad and free
Might pave the mental way for moral good.

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