

The Granite Echo

Organ of The Dyce C.O.'s

Edited and Published on behalf of the Men's Committee, by Guy A. Aldred, at Quarry Camp, Dyce, near Aberdeen, and 17 Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush, London, W. Annual Subscription, 1s. 6d. All unsigned communications are written by the Editor, but are not endorsed necessarily by the Committee or Members of the Camp in their entirety.

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OCTOBER, 1916.

[ONE PENNY.]

St. Helena, N.B., 1916!

Minus Sir H. ^WLOWE !!!

(By T. H. ELLISON).

Bonny Scotland! And as usual, the windows of heaven are open. It appears as if the so-called just and merciful God of the civilized nations of Europe—who, I think, must be taking a day off—is preparing once more to flood the earth, so disgusted is he with the madness of the human race. I do not intend to try to probe into the feelings of the most High towards the present world catastrophe, since I suspect that that doubtful creator of the universe wishes to be left most severely alone. But I will try to give a plain unvarnished account of certain persons who have been banished from their people and their homes for having the supreme effrontery to maintain that which they believe is right; and that, in their opinion, the great majority of the inhabitants of the earth are wrong. A proportion of these so-called misguided men are, at the present moment, at a Quarry Camp, at Dyce, near Aberdeen, operating upon a road; and, judging from information received, engaged in opening up a new suburb to Aberdeen.

The day on which I and about twenty more arrived, after twelve hours' journey, reminded me somewhat of the Fen district, only possibly it was a little worse. There was not quite enough water for boating. I can say, without the least shadow of a doubt, that the mud was anything from four to six inches thick; and so the walk of a mile from the station to the camp was accomplished somewhat under difficulties; and since the windows of heaven were opened as stated already, our condition on arrival at the camp was that usually associated with drowned rats. Comrade Aldred was one of the party and seemed to treat the experience as a huge joke, and thought it all very funny; but having considered seriously the matter from every point of view, I confess I could see no humour in it at all then. However after I had been at the camp a few hours, I confess that I veered over to his opinion and thought it highly amusing. In fact, I think that everyone here is fairly happy considering the conditions, weather and otherwise.

The countryside is fairly in sympathy with us. Both local ministers expressed their friendship almost immediately the camp was formed and invited members to their respective churches. One visited the camp to state his respect for men who maintained their loyalty to their convictions as we had in his opinion. The invitations were accepted in the spirit in which they were extended, and the sacred edifices have been filled by Atheists and Christians, united in one common opposition to war.

All members of the camp are sure, I believe, that they have done right in accepting this work as prisoners, though they would not have accepted it had they been free men in the true sense of the term.

The organisation of the duties of the camp are arranged by ourselves. Comrade Meyers, of Reading, is, I find, the chairman

and conducts the office as if he had been at it all his life. Brother Jobe is secretary and arranges the hours of duty in a like commendable manner. Bonar Thomson displays his talents as an elocutionist and poetic reciter. A graduate of Oxford University—who goes by the name of Runacres—is sojourning amongst us and seems to delight in his enforced exile. I believe that the 'varsities have had the honour also of turning out other members of this conscript commune.

From Reading, besides friend Meyers, are brothers Holloway and Daniels—also here for the benefit of their health. Willesden contributes comrade Wilson, who doubtless enjoyed his free ride no less than others! Almost every religious denomination of Great Britain is represented; so much so, that the poor Atheist appears to be in a minority. One sees small groups debating; and, the acoustic properties of the Scottish atmosphere being good, such words as "established" and "disestablished" and the theological etcetera fall on the ears of the unwilling and unwitting Atheist listener. We learn on high authority that our recent translation from prison to banishment is due not to the philanthropic disposition of the Cabinet, but to the direct intervention of Jehovah! But why, oh why! did not the God of Israel move before?

Probably—at least I hope so, should the spirit move them, the materialists may win a considerable number of converts to the Moreist philosophy. Much satire, worthy of *Punch* himself, and happily ironical at the expense of army and prison life, finds vent in these tents of Ishmael.

Personally, I consider quarrying to be a change for the better, as compared with the art of bag-making and other jail accomplishments. The work is hard but novel to most of us. All seem pleased to enjoy the change, and work a little harder than the proverbial bee! The foulest blot on the landscape at present is, in my opinion, the conditions under which we swot. I do not mean food, as the supplies of this commodity are excellent. But I mean the housing accommodation in a particularly damp climate, which may cause serious after-effects: sanitation—there is none! A committee has been formed to solicit improvements, if possible, in these respects. We have great confidence that, in the very near future, this committee will attain its object.

A proportion of the merry men who have taken root here on the rock-pile respect the courage but deplore the folly of those comrades who have refused to attest their signatures to the now famous scrap o' paper, and have remained consequently behind prison walls. But we have no hesitation in affirming that, should extreme measures be adopted against imprisoned kith and kin, every banished adherent of the cause in Great Britain will elect to share their fate. For whether banished or jailed, or howsoever treated, there is but one motto for every one of us "children of the dead end": "United we stand! Divided we fall!"

Impressions from France.

(By FRANK SHACKLETON).

The traveller, when he has gained the summit of the silver-crested mountain and views with awe and wonder the vista that opens out before him, with deep gorges and ravines below, thinks not of the ardour and struggle of the many weary days through which he has had to pass, but counts on the glory of gaining his object. The explorer exposed to the dangers and terrors of the Arctic colds, or the heat, swamps or disease of the tropical jungle, risks all these for the goal ahead. The mariner bravely heading his little ship against the tempests of the deep which at any time might engulf his frail barque, looks back with pride and honor when he is safely moored in the Haven of Safety, after overcoming his hard and troublous way. So, too, we, although the goal for which we strive is not yet reached, have come into somewhat smoother waters and are enabled to repair our broken masts and sails ready to launch out once again against the storm-tossed sea of ignorance, malice and fear.

It was with feelings of sadness that I, with five others, left the station at Harrow early in April, in company with a party of six of His Majesty's soldiers, little knowing the exciting adventures that were in store for us. We were escorted to Mill Hill, and there initiated into the inner working of Barrack life, and the vernacular of the Army. Thence we were taken to Felixstowe, where we found the nucleus of what turned out to a memorable little party of 17. Easter was spent in "Clink" and many weary days until May 6th. This was a momentous day, the beginning of three of the most wonderful months of my life. We were all brought out to go before the O.C., and I could see by the looks of the first few to come back that something was going to happen. Little did I think when I was ushered before this high personage that he had direct orders from the War Office to cancel all our court martials and send us to France at a moment's notice. No chance of writing home, or of a "God speed" but locked up in our cells and a strict watch kept day and night until the morning of Monday, May 8th, when we were aroused from our fitful slumbers at 3 a.m., and marched off to the station under escort, and thence entrained for Southampton. It was a glorious treat to see the green of the English countryside, as nature was awaking from her long winter sleep, but our thoughts were too full of other things to appreciate this. We found ourselves next on the boat which was to convey us to our unknown destination, accompanied by men whose consciences had taken them to the blood-stained fields of Flanders and had been home to their loved ones, from whom they had just parted, perhaps, alas! never to see them again. I shall never forget that impotent helpless mass of humanity huddled together on the deck of the boat.

On arriving at Havre, our little band was marched through the town in the rain to a camp some five miles distant, but here nobody knew anything about us, so we had to pack up once again and tramp another four miles to a base camp where our first conflict with the Authorities in France took place. We were given a nice hut all to ourselves, and told to parade at 6.45 the next morning. This we refused to do, and we were consequently given 28 days field punishment, No. 1. We were taken to Harfleur, the scene of bloody battles between our forefathers and those of our present allies. We here again refused work, and were confined to a tent without boards, and slept on the damp ground. We were not there long, however, before an armed escort came for us, and once again we were off to an unknown destination. One of the soldiers told us that we were right off to the firing line, and we quite expected our punishment would have to be finished there.

Troubles, however, always seem when looking ahead, to be unpassable barriers, but when we actually come to them they dwindle down into mole hills. Instead of finding ourselves somewhere round about the Ypres salient, or Hell Corner, as we expected, we found ourselves in Boulogne, and were there marched off to the Detention Barracks, where we were subjected to rather severe handling, for force and fear of death or severe punishment are the only ways by which man can be made to do the heinous things that he has to in the name of "self-defence," whether he be British, French, Russian or German.

I look back upon those weary days in June, and am thankful that we were given the health and strength to go through this ordeal. A month on bully beef and biscuits, and plain tea, and various other forms of punishment is not conducive to good health, and it is not surprising that one or two of us found ourselves in Hospital before we left France. It is extraordinary this dual aspect of the Army, for in these institutions one meets nothing but kindness, when only a few miles away hatred is being manufactured every day. I thought of the words of Verestchagin, "A battlefield is the stupidest place on the face of the earth, on the one side of the field you have the Hospital, where the sick and wounded are being nursed, and on the other side you have men inflicting fresh wounds to engross the Doctors and Nurses."

After finishing my 28 days I was separated from my colleagues and taken to the N.C.C. Camp, which we found in a beautiful sylvan valley. The non-combatants were apparently enjoying themselves in their new surroundings. It was whilst here that I heard the news that the first four of the seventeen had been sentenced to death, later to be commuted to 10 years penal servitude. I then thought of the horrors of Militarism and how the insidious poison was eating into our National life that men who, trying to put forward the principles of brotherhood, should find no better reward for their labour than derision from their fellow men and the fate of a convict settlement.

It was not long before the other 30 followed, thus making a total of 34 to suffer the same fate. I was left alone, and was sent to Calais to do another 28 days. I then had for the first time a feeling of despair, for my comrades had all been sent away, and I was left to do another month by myself. I found, however, some good friends amongst the soldiers who were there doing detention for minor offences, and these are the men who will prove to be our best friends. Those who have seen the horrors of a present day battlefield, with masses of

humanity battered beyond recognition, men lying in thousands, dying terrible deaths through obnoxious gases, others disembowelled by sharp bayonets, men who have experienced these things, and been nigh to death are the ones from whom we get the real sympathy. They know what we are standing for, and realise that we are out to bring about a better state of things, however futile our efforts may appear to the world at present, and see beyond the "war clouds and the reddened ways the glory of the coming days." It is all very well to read in the news of glorious charges, brilliant victories, heroic defence, but the horror of each thing is only known to those who participate.

At Calais I again refused and was confined to a dreary guard room all alone, and this was one of the most trying periods of my experiences. Loneliness is one of the worst of punishments, and when cut off from friends at home, the burden at times becomes unbearable. I was confined thus for a fortnight, when my long awaited trial came off. This was my second experience of a F.G.C.M., and I cannot express my feelings as I stood before this court of "justice" in whose hands lay the destiny of my life. After two days of suspense, I heard the result of their deliberations. 10 years for refusing to clean out a latrine pail! That was my fate. I had visions of Portland coming before my eyes, a young life utterly wasted, and an estrangement perhaps for ever from my dear ones at home, but these thoughts were soon allayed, when I looked on the other side of the picture. As long as there is a God of Truth, Right and Justice must ultimately triumph, and though the path may lead along devious and hard ways, there must be an end, and the path will become easier if we constantly keep in mind the goal for which we are striving.

From Calais I was taken back to Rouen, a journey of some 200 miles, and there found that my comrades had departed. After a wait of another two weeks I was on my way to dear old England, "the land of the free," in company with three stalwart guards. I reached Winchester on August 7th, being thus three months on my pilgrimage in France.

I look back with pleasure and pride on these four months of Army life. It has been a wonderful experience. We have met some fine characters although our wanderings have not taken us beyond the confines of detention barracks and guard rooms. We have not been out for a martyr's crown, but merely doing just what we think has been our duty, obeying that instinctive call within, and although our actions did not always meet with approbation, we had certainly gained more respect when we left France than we anticipated there. Beyond a little mental anxiety, and at times a sharp calling from within for more to eat, I don't think our physical sufferings have been so bad as some of our comrades have had to endure over here. Of course, in our early days we were somewhat brow beaten, but they found that although they say they can tame lions in the Army, the C.O.s have presented quite a fresh proposition.

Love alone is the only power that will bind together the diverse and scattered fragments of humanity, and only when Nations have adopted this as their ideal of national greatness, shall we have that state of society for which the world has been seeking for the past 200 years. Then and then only shall we realise the futility of the sword, and we shall then have a brotherhood of men freed from the shackles that have so closely bound them, and worthy of the best traditions of humanity.

The Crisis at Dyce.

MEN'S COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT.

"We, the Men's Committee of the Dyce Camp, have come to the following conclusions concerning the death in this camp of Mr. W. L. Roberts, of Stockport, which occurred on Friday, September 8th last:

Serious Position.

"We view the present position as extremely serious, and assert that but for indifference and neglect, our late comrade Roberts would be alive now. His death can be traced to the following main causes:

- (a) "Men have been sent direct from prisons hundreds of miles, into exposed and harsh conditions of life.
- (b) "The camp was not in readiness to receive the men sent, as regards ordinary feeding arrangements, the provision of nursing facilities, including suitable feeding and housing of sick, etc.
- (c) "The medical attention is inadequate.
- (d) "The recommendations of the Men's Committee re accommodation, clothing, and general conditions were largely ignored.

"Up to the time of our late comrade's decease, there appeared to be no proper appreciation of the position by those responsible, and the urgency of adequate improvements in the conditions obtaining in the camp.

Our Minimum.

"The minimum improvements which will meet the case in the committee's opinion are as follows:

- (1) "Telephonic communications with the village or some alternative quick means of communication.
- (2) "Every serious case of illness shall be sent to the hospital or infirmary, where beds shall be guaranteed by the Home Office Committee.
- (3) "Less serious cases shall be placed in some suitable building provided with beds and every facility for nursing.
- (4) "Upon the receipt of a medical certificate stating that anyone is unfit for dwelling in the camp, the Men's Committee shall have power to send such man home again upon their own responsibility.

Sending the Unfit Home.

"With reference to the last paragraph, the committee—now having been approved by the Home Office as representing the men—have assumed responsibility for sending such unfit men home to recover their health. The committee feel that they would be doing less than their duty—in view of their responsibility for the health and welfare of members of the camp—did they hesitate to take this step.

"The Home Office Committee for the Employment of Conscientious Objectors have had our views and determination on these points placed clearly before them. And it has promised to send a deputation to the camp to meet the Men's Committee, and to interview individual members of the camp, by request of the latter, on the 19th inst. Notwithstanding this fact, Mr. Curtis Gray, the local representative of the Home Office, visited the camp last night (Monday), and demanded that the questions as to conditions of labour and camp life be decided by his orders at once, and not be treated as sub judice until the deputation had met the Men's Committee.

Home Office View.

"Mr. Gray's orders as to camp life are, virtually, that the conditions responsible for Mr. Roberts's death shall remain unaltered. On the other hand, the hours of labour are to be doubled, and men are to be called

upon to work ten hours instead of five, at quarry work to which they are unaccustomed; whilst still suffering from the weakness occasioned by prison treatment; on rations insufficient to sustain their strength; and with an accommodation that renders health impossible. In this connection, we would add that men are housed in leaky tents (not huts), the construction of which dates from 1902, and are condemned admittedly by the Local Government Board.

"A majority of the men spontaneously decided to refuse to recognise Mr. Gray's orders, pending the Home Office's consideration of the serious grievances indicated in this letter. This action is endorsed by the undersigned members of the Men's Committee; and we request the publication of this letter in your columns, in order that our situation may be appreciated correctly.

"(Signed) A. J. MAYERS (Chairman).

"H. F. RUNACRES (Treasurer).

"E. T. JOPE (Secretary).

"H. E. DANIELL.

"E. H. JOHNSON.

"W. J. BOXALL.

"G. A. ALDRED.

"L. BESANVILLE.

"C. C. WILLSON.

"J. BONAR THOMSON.

"Committee Members."

ANONYMOUS "OFFICIAL" REPLY.

The following "reply" to the foregoing statement of fact was published in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* and also the *Evening Gazette* for September 13th, "on good authority." It was summarised in the *Weekly Journal* as coming from "One who knows."

"Completely groundless allegations."

"With reference to the men's statement, we are informed on good authority that the allegations contained in it are groundless.

"In regard to the death of Mr. W. L. Roberts, of Stockport, it is stated that in spite of the rules that men should be back in camp by 9 o'clock, this man was seen returning from Aberdeen by the last train. He had to walk to the camp from Dyce station in pouring rain, and got wet through, and it is considered that this might have been the cause of the chill which resulted in his death, rather than bad camp conditions.

"Medical Attention."

"Then as to the allegation that the medical attention at the camp is inadequate, a qualified doctor was appointed as medical officer to the camp, and his duties commenced on the first day that the men arrived.

"The letter further states that the camp was not in readiness to receive the men sent, as regards ordinary feeding arrangements, etc. This is denied. The camp was erected a day or two before the arrival of the first batch of men. There was camp accommodation for 150 before any of the objectors reached the camp, and the men arrived in fours and sixes from the different jails.

"The very best food."

"As to the feeding arrangements, the rations are exactly the same as are supplied to the troops on home service. The very best food that can be got is supplied to the camp, and it has been noted that many of the men appear to have improved considerably in physical appearance since their arrival at Dyce.

"Coming to the statement that the men are housed in leaky tents, the whole equipment was issued from the Army Service Department, and is exactly the same as is supplied to camps where troops are quartered. As to the tents not being watertight, it is said that this had been due to

slackness by the men themselves in not seeing that the tent-ropes, etc., were properly adjusted in wet weather.

"As to the hours of labour, the men are simply being called upon to work the usual ten hours day. It is insisted upon by the Home Office that they should do so, and 85 of the objectors have agreed to these conditions. There is considerable loss when the valuable machinery is allowed to remain idle.

"Arrogance."

"The camp has been under the eye of the County Medical Officer, Dr Watt, and has also been visited on behalf of the Home Office by a doctor from the Local Government Board. Adequate arrangements have been made with various local institutions for the reception of infectious and other cases of illness that may have to be dealt with. The Home Office, it is understood, has taken steps so that no man who has been certified as unfit by the Medical Officer should remain in camp. The statement that the Men's Committee have assumed responsibility for sending unfit men home to recover their health is described as an arrogant one, as the responsibility in such cases rests with the Medical Officer.

"The whole conditions of the camp, we are informed, are similar to those generally existing in military camps, and so far the weather conditions have not been at all severe. The men are fed and housed, and are being supplied with two working suits, change of underclothing, boots, etc. They get 8d. a day, seven days a week, and in necessitous cases, are allowed separation allowances for their dependents on a certain scale.

"While engaged in this work, our informant states the men are leading a healthy, open-air life; and, as to food, in being supplied with rations given to home service troops, they have no reason to grumble."

The Delusion.

(By F. CAMPBELL.)

Against the yellow, wat'ry dawn it stood,
The silent image with its peaceful eyes
And outstretched arms. Behind the little
wood

Rustled upon the morning breeze: the
skies

Were overcast with cloud; the distance
drew

The outline of some round dark hills;
this side

There stretched long flats, all grey and wet
with dew;

Beyond the restless murmur of the barren
tide.

Around was vain, part-demolished walls,
Loose stone on stone. Hark! sudden
from afar

There boomed, as o'er the hills God's
thunder falls,

The guns of those gone forth to end the
war.

Alone the image stood against the dawn;
The soldier as he hurried on his way

A moment knelt and prayed; his face was
drawn,

Yet not with pain—for there stern hate
held sway

And curved those steely lines round mouth
and eyes.

Before the image of the Prince of Peace
Yet dared he kneel—while sobbing to the
skies,

Widow and child entreated for release.

Hark! ever nearer, crashing murder forth,
And belching fury in their maddening

roar,

The guns bespeak an angry nation's wrath,
The guns of those gone forth to end the
war.

The image stood and round it in the air
Stood grinning forms invisible array
Of those whose energies and homes are
there,

And mocking laughed to see the soldier
pray.

They knew that *they* had kept the image
sound,

They knew men deemed it was the power
of God

Had kept it from the ruin all around,
And thought that it was holy ground they
trod.

And as the Christ, accursed upon the tree,
Looked down, a man-made image, from
afar,

There pealed forth in exultant jubilee
The guns of those gone forth to end the
war.

Life at Dyce.

The Camp for conscientious objectors was formed at Dyce on August 15th, by the arrival of the first six men released from prison. These included Bonar Thomson and Mr. E. T. Jope. Other arrivals trooped in, and seven days later the Men's Committee was formed. Thomson became one of its members, and Mr. Jope was elected secretary. Since then, a variety of circumstances have combined to make this camp the most widely known in the kingdom.

On Tuesday, September 12th, a special correspondent of the *Aberdeen Free Press* visited the camp, and his view of the situation and conditions existing there appeared in this journal the following day. It was reproduced in the *Evening Gazette*, and also in the *Weekly Free Press*. He admitted that no effort was made to exaggerate any discomforts or hardships that might be attendant on life in a camp exposed to Scotland's variable climatic conditions, and that he was left entirely at liberty to form his own conclusions from what he saw during the course of his visit. A summary of his impressions is appended:

"The camp is situated about two miles to the north-west of Dyce, in a field immediately adjacent to the quarries. It is composed of 27 Army bell tents and three marquees, and is inhabited by 250 young men, every one of whom has been in prison for refusing to obey orders while in the Army. No fewer than 34 of them who have been at the front have been court-martialled and sentenced to death. The extreme penalty, however, was commuted and the men sentenced to varying periods of imprisonment. They were afterwards released on intimating that they were willing to undertake work of national importance.

"The men sleep in the bell tents, and the marquees are used, one as a store, the second as a dining tent, and the third as a recreation tent. Several of the sleeping tents have been fitted, by the men themselves, with roughly put together floors made of logs, but in many cases they have to lie upon the ground, protected from the damp earth only by waterproof sheets. Each man is provided with a straw mattress and three blankets similar to those served out to soldiers, and eight men occupy a tent. Many professions and callings are represented in the camp, and artists may be found working shoulder to shoulder with artisans, University students with clerks, and teachers with men whose acquaintance with the three R's is merely of nodding variety. They are just a very ordinary and rather nice mannered body of young men, such as could be drawn from any community and in their conversation they do not dwell upon the hardships of their changed conditions of life or betray any strong animosity towards the powers that have, as it were, plucked them from comfort-

able homes and surroundings of comparative ease and sent them forth to a strange country to be little else than stonebreakers.

"The work in the quarries is controlled and arranged by committees appointed by the members of the camp in accordance with the stipulations of the Home Office. The majority of the men are sent to the quarries to work in two shifts, each of two and a half hours duration. The first shift commences work at 7 a.m. and is relieved by the second shift at 9.30 a.m., which continues work until 12 noon, the dinner hour. The first shift resumes at 1 p.m. and the second at 3.30 p.m., and the day's work ceases at 6 p.m. This arrangement of shifts means that each man works five hours per day. The nature of the work is undoubtedly heavy and must impose a considerable physical strain on men not accustomed to it, but orders have been received that in future each man must do 10 hours' work daily. The working shifts are sub-divided into small gangs, to each of which a particular task is allotted. One gang is engaged in lifting the stones from the heap, loading them on wheelbarrows, and conveying them to the crushers. A second gang, stationed at the discharge end of the crushers, loads the broken metal on barrows, and empties them into waggons which are subsequently hauled to the station by traction engines. A third gang removes the refuse stone, while a fourth is at the station loading the railway waggons. Other men are employed in cleaning up about the camp.

"The most casual glance will prove to a visitor that the men belong to a class much above that which usually supplies labourers, and one cannot help but be amused at the sight of a bespectacled, studious-looking young man, wearing rough corduroys and heavy boots, vigorously shovelling stones as if the filling of wheelbarrows was his one and only aim in life. It must be conceded that the men work hard, and the traction engines are being kept fully employed drawing their loads to the station.

"For this work each man is paid eightpence per day in addition to his food. If a man has dependents he may allocate to them sixpence out of his eightpence, and they will receive a separation allowance from the Government. He will then have twopence to himself, which, if he is a thrifty man, he will no doubt put in the savings bank.

"The duties of cooks are assumed by members of the camp, some of whom have had experience in the culinary art. The kitchen is a rather primitive affair, constructed of rough planks, three sides being open to the elements. For breakfast the men are each allowed two ounces of bacon and half a pound of bread along with tea and margarine. Dinner consists of meat and vegetables; and tea, of bread, jam, margarine and cheese. Potatoes are rarely seen as they are not included in the official ration, and no supper is provided by the authorities. Of late complaint has been made that the food is insufficient in quantity to meet the requirements of the camp.

"In fine weather the conditions of life in the camp are on the whole tolerable and fairly pleasant for those who retain their health and are immune from accident, but when rain sets in another story has to be told, as many of the tents are far from being weather proof, with the result that the bedding becomes wet and the men are exposed to the danger of catching colds or even worse maladies. The tents were sewn together sixteen years ago and exhibit traces of hard wear and tear. In several of them there are holes through which the finger could be easily passed, at the seams the cloth is very thin and allows moisture to

find its way to the interior of the tent. During the exceptionally wet weather which was experienced a week or two ago a number of the men found their tents simply uninhabitable and were driven to seek shelter in outhouses which were put at their disposal by a neighbouring farmer. These men still occupy outhouses in preference to the accommodation provided at the camp. In one loft, which is only about 20 feet square, 15 men are sleeping. The only means of ventilation is a small skylight in the roof, and even when the loft is unoccupied the atmosphere is oppressive and stagnant. On Tuesday afternoon this loft had one occupant, a young man said, by the camp secretary, to be suffering from influenza, and the only aids to comfort he had in his sickness were his thin straw mattress laid on the floor and three coarse blankets. Down below in the stable—it may be a byre—another sick man was lying on a heap of straw in one of the stalls which until recently was occupied by either a horse or a cow. It is possible, however, although improbable, that the man may have the constitution of a horse or a cow, and may feel quite at home in his present surroundings. In another, but larger, loft, 30 men find sleeping accommodation. A doctor has been appointed to attend the camp, but the men complain of the lack of suitable nursing facilities in the way of comfortable quarters and special dietary, and they are strongly of the opinion that a small wooden building should be erected close to the camp, in which invalids would receive some measure of proper treatment and attention. Since the opening of the camp 73 men have been ill, and one man who is suspected of having contracted scarlet fever is now under observation in an Aberdeen hospital. The members of the camp feel that they are not being employed on work that is of very great national importance, and a number of them have offered their services in the interests of agriculture, and would be willing to work on farms or at other occupations more suited to their physical abilities."

Jottings.

The statement of the Conscientious Objectors, resident at Risbridge House, Kedington, Suffolk, in reply to the resolutions of the N.C.F. Committee, passed on August 27th last, was read at a general meeting of the members of the Dyce Quarry Camp, and Wednesday, September 6th last. It was endorsed with one dissentient, and the meeting decided to make its agreement public. Since the Risbridge House statement has appeared in the *Tribunal* there is no need to reproduce it here.

Rejected Corner Stones

We are the corner stones, which the builders have rejected. Yet these worthy folk of political, social, religious, and moral importance cannot forgive us for their own ill-usage of our talents. They feel that the temple is ill-constructed, so long as we are denied our proper place in the structure of the edifice. Yet they refuse to accord us our proper place lest the truth should prove their undoing. The truth would indeed make our persecutors free: for the disciples of imperialism can play no part in the erection of the temple of human liberty.

As rejected corner stones, we have found a lodging in a granite quarry. That is appropriate. Dumped down in such a fashion, amid such surroundings, we have sent an echo throughout the length and breadth of the land. Stone has clashed against stone. The stony hardness of Government persecution, its supreme indifference to suffering. There has ensued against the stony determination of conscience, its supreme indifference to suffering. There has ensued a war of stones and its noise and excitement shall be recorded in the "Granite Echo."

The fight may not last long. So the "Echo" expects no great lease of life. But it will prove faithful, which is all that any have any right to ask.

The sound will sometimes be that of anecdote and sometimes it will noise abroad more tragic humour.

Thus it echoes from a certain recreation tent the laughter of a happy pun, which completed the discomfiture of a certain gentleman, anxious to distinguish himself in the world of granite.

"Why," asked an innocent, "is Curtis Gray?" All around grunted ignorance of the cause. They could not say why Curtis should be Gray or even why he should be at all. There seemed nothing of national importance connected with the gentleman, his name, or his activity. But the querist was a determined young man, with a solemn manner and tragic determination. He insisted on some one answering his question or allowing him an opportunity of doing so. We knew many reasons why Curtis should be Gray but we suspected that those reasons failed to include the answer to the question. So we gave it up. "Because," came the triumphant, ready retort, "he lost at Dyce." The camp took up the sally and it sallied round the camp and into these columns as an echo of our fight.

Curtis is Gray because he lost at Dyce. And the Government — ? Wait — and hear! Every gamble has its noise: and every noise has its echo. We shall report and retort next month.

Why they Refused.

The following statement was made by our comrade James Fairweather at his Trial by District Court-martial, at Hamilton, on June 12th, 1916:

"In answer to the charge made against me, of disobeying a lawful command, given by a superior officer, I present the following statement in explanation and justification of my action:

"Not having enlisted in the army, although deemed to be a soldier, I do not feel bound to obey any command given by any military officer. I am an anti-militarist because I regard the military system as an evil one, being a menace to peace, and freedom, and social progress. The military organisation of Society I consider to be a potent cause of war. It has been stated that if we wish for peace we must prepare for war—to my mind, to prepare for war is a sure way of producing war. If we wish for peace, we must prepare for peace; and one way of preparing for peace is in the refusal of men to take part in military service.

"I am a Republican, therefore cannot swear allegiance to a king.

"As a Socialist, I cannot become a member of an army which is controlled by the Capitalist Class, for the purpose of perpetuating the system of capitalistic exploitation. I am opposed to all war, but even if I were in favour of war as a method of settling disputes, I could not take part in this present war, which I regard as being fundamentally a struggle between two rival groups of great empires for supremacy, and a conflict between opposing sections of the international Capitalist Class, for control of the world's markets and the power to exploit the economic and human resources of the undeveloped parts of the earth. As an international Socialist and anti-Imperialist, I decline to take part. Patriotism to me is an obsolete ideal. I cannot confine my loyalty and devotion to one section of the human race, but rather give it to the whole of mankind. I hold human life sacred, and accordingly oppose war, international and civil, because it is destructive of human life.

"I believe in peace, not as a remote ideal, but as a reality of the present: not an intermittent thing—that is, a period of preparation preceding war, or a period of exhaustion following on war; but a permanent condition of society, a state of things in which physical force has been eliminated from human relationships. Such a condition I believe to be conducive to the development of Humanity to the greatest heights.

"My wish now is to stand for the peace ideal, and work in co-operation with the pacifists in all countries in the war against war, which war is carried on, not with destructive weapons, but with the constructive ones of intelligence and love."