



Report of the Work

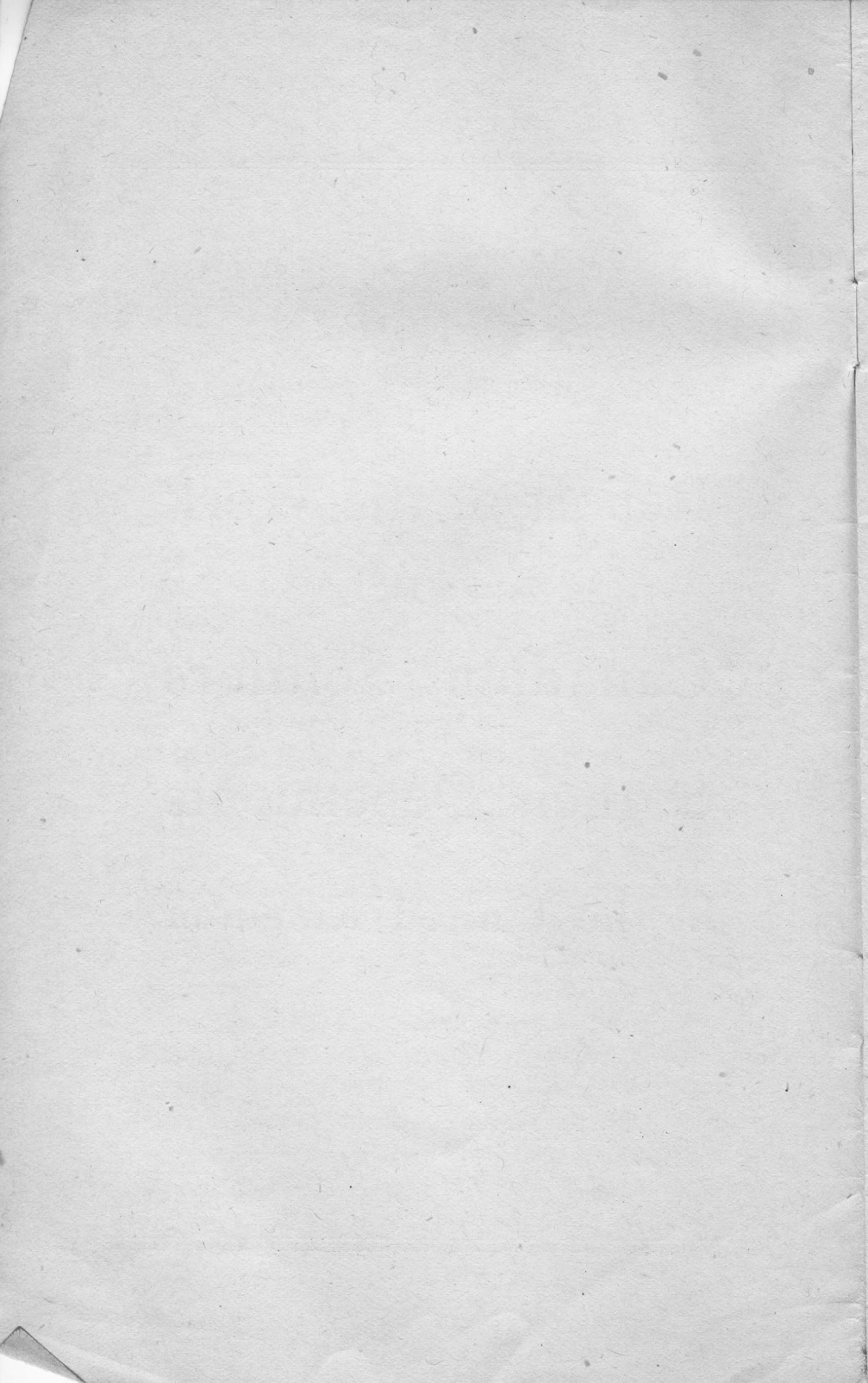
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Canadian Soldiers

& their Dependents

in the United Kingdom

October 20th, 1919.



PRELUDE.

NOW that the War has ended and the personnel of the Canadian Army have almost all returned to their homes in Canada, and the work which we have been doing all through the War is to be handed over to others, it is considered that the time has arrived when the people of Canada may like to know something of the organised efforts which have been made in this country to avoid unnecessary hardship for the wives and dependents of the men of the Overseas Forces.

It is the purpose of this small pamphlet to explain, as clearly and as concisely as possible, the machinery which has been set up to deal with these cases and to tell of the results accomplished. In order that each phase of this work may be made clear to the reader, the Report has been divided into sections.

The help which has been given in all cases of hardship has been a small, practical way of showing the grateful feeling the people of England have for the splendid services and sacrifices which the Canadian Forces have given to the British Empire. The work we have been privileged to do has only been made possible by the kindness and co-operation of many of the people who were officially connected with the Canadian Army. In this direction special attention should be drawn to the extremely smooth working between the various departments of the Pay Office and this office, which has been chiefly due to the generous

feeling and kind co-operation of Brigadier-General Ross, C.M.G., the Paymaster-General, who has always given the most whole-hearted support to every phase of the work. His help has been rendered in such a quiet way that few, if any, know of his great interest in and help given to soldiers' dependents. This unofficial assistance was, of course, apart from the great work which he has so successfully carried on as Paymaster-General.

In making this public acknowledgment of the ready and valuable assistance given to us at all times by both individuals and organisations, we could not possibly over-emphasise our indebtedness to all at the Canadian Red Cross for their ever-ready co-operation and help.

We take this opportunity to express our thanks to Colonel Blaylock, C.B.E., Commissioner of the Red Cross, for the kind support he has always given us.

To Lady Drummond we owe a very deep debt of gratitude for her great help with these cases while busy at her Canadian Red Cross work, and also to her secretary, Mrs. Harrison.

Our sincere thanks are due to Major Hayward, Member and Overseas Representative of the Pay and Allowance Board of Ottawa, for the continued help and kindness he has given us and for his unfailing sympathy. It will be understood that the communication between his office and ours has been constant from day to day, and we cannot be too grateful to him for all the assistance which he and all those in his department have given to this work, which has helped in every instance to alleviate any suffering or hardship.

We desire to express our sincere thanks to Sir George Perley, High Commissioner for Canada, for his kindness in providing us with office accommodation.

We also are indebted beyond measure to the office bearers and members of the various associations which have given us their unfailing help at all times in the prosecution of our work, so that we have been able to carry our investigations and relief work into every town and village in Great Britain and Ireland, however remote or difficult of access the places may have been.

R. B. BARRON.

PARLIAMENT MANSIONS,
ORCHARD STREET,
VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,
October 20th, 1919.

ONE of the most difficult of the many perplexing problems which the sudden outbreak of war thrust upon us was the care of the dependents of our fighting men in cases of hardship not covered by Government allowances.

In order to solve this problem there was created in England the Prince of Wales' Fund, afterwards known as the National Relief Fund, and in Canada the Patriotic Fund. Amongst the first of the many difficulties met with by the National Relief Fund was the provision for dependents of Imperial soldiers living in the Dominions and Colonies, and a similar difficulty presented itself to the Canadian Patriotic Fund in its endeavour to provide for the needs of the dependents of Canadian soldiers living in England. Fortunately an arrangement was quickly arrived at which disposed of the difficulties of both these organisations. At a conference between Sir George Perley, High Commissioner for Canada, and Sir Warren Fisher, at that time Secretary of the National Relief Fund, it was agreed that, under certain circumstances, the Canadian Patriotic Fund would attend to the exceptional needs of any dependents of British soldiers resident in Canada whilst the National Relief Fund would undertake a similar responsibility towards those dependents of Canadian soldiers resident in the British Isles.

This agreement did not in any way undertake to give relief to the dependents when the hardship was the direct result of the policy laid down by either country whereby the allowance was inadequate or the method of administration was faulty. In other words: the help was to be given

in cases of hardship arising from exceptional circumstances which could not be covered by the ordinary regulations governing the issue of separation allowances.

It was never anticipated that the number of cases of Canadian dependents in this country needing assistance would ever reach the enormous number that have been dealt with, nor that the National Relief Fund would be called upon for the many thousands of pounds that have been needed to assist these cases; but the Relief Fund has loyally kept the pact, and has most generously met every claim which could in any way be held to come under the agreement. In the following Report we give, under separate headings, a more detailed account of the work that has been done.

Almost simultaneously with the arrival in England of the First Canadian Contingent, their wives and children also began to arrive in large numbers, many of them without money and without the knowledge of where to find a home.

**Women and
Children sent
over from
Canada.**

In such cases it often happened that weeks elapsed before the separation allowance was transferred to this country, and it often transpired that the women had left Canada without notifying the authorities of their change of address. The seriousness of the situation and the need for prompt action will be readily understood. In all such cases every effort was made to have these new arrivals met and taken to suitable accommodation until permanent homes could be found for them, and money was advanced until the separation allowance was settled.

An arrangement was afterwards made with Colonel Ward, C.B.E., at that time Chief Paymaster, whereby advances could be made in cases of emergency, and the amount was deducted from the separation allowance in small monthly instalments. This excellent arrangement

**Advances
against
Separation
Allowance.**

has been continued from that time, and thanks to the kind co-operation of the Pay Office Staff, it has worked most smoothly and so prevented great hardship in a vast number of cases, especially when newly married wives have been waiting for their separation allowance claims to be completed, the husband having had to return to France immediately after the marriage. In these cases the amount so advanced was deducted before the arrears of pay were sent out.

During the early period of the War all the investigation and relief work was done through the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association; but the ever-increasing numbers of the Canadian Overseas Forces, and the frequent marriages consequent upon the removal of the early restrictions, added considerably to the already large number of dependents, and this, together with the demand for more thorough investigations, made it imperative that an office should be established by the Canadian Authorities to deal exclusively with the work of their own Army. Consequent upon this, it became necessary to set up new machinery for the purpose of carrying on our work throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. This was done by obtaining the generous co-operation and kind help of many of the recognised voluntary agencies for dealing with war work.

The procedure for obtaining separation allowance in the Imperial Army is very simple. The wives have only to produce their marriage certificate and the allowance is received in due course. In the case of the English wives of Canadian soldiers the position is very different and very much more complicated. The issue of separation allowance in these cases involves a change of citizenship and carries with it the right of entry into Canada without a passport, and, since the signing of the Armistice, a free

**Investigation
of Separation
Allowance
Claims.**

passage to Canada. It will therefore be seen that a very careful investigation had to be made in every case before separation allowance could be issued. In addition, investigations were undertaken for all sections of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada as the soldiers in France were continually sending in enquiries regarding their domestic affairs.

The separation allowance, while adequate to meet **Illness.** ordinary needs, was frequently insufficient to meet expenses caused by illness, &c. When such cases were brought to our notice, a grant was made either from the money provided by the National Relief Fund or from a special fund contributed by friends interested in our work for the specific purpose of dealing with cases of hardship not provided for by the rules governing the distribution of other moneys. The procedure for dealing with such cases was that directly one of our visitors reported that a Canadian soldier's wife or dependent in any town or village of the United Kingdom was in distress, a small amount of assistance was at once given in order that no hardship might occur, a full report was then asked for, and on receipt of this, and in the case of illness, also a certificate from the local doctor, we immediately did all that we considered necessary and possible to help this dependent.

In this connection we should like very much to point out the extremely valuable assistance we have received at all times and in all circumstances from the very able, efficient and sympathetic people who have so kindly voluntarily discharged the frequently onerous duties of visitors. A pleasing testimony to their efficiency and self-sacrifice is the fact that few complaints have reached this office from the dependents themselves that they were

not properly cared for after the case had been brought to our notice.

Funerals.

In cases which came to our notice of the death of a soldier's wife or children, enquiries were instituted and, where necessary, arrangements made for the funeral and the expenses paid.

Guardians to Children.

Where motherless children were left to be cared for, a request was made to the Military Authorities for the return of the man wherever possible ; upon his return he was consulted as to suitable arrangements being made for the future welfare of his children until such time as he would be released from military service and be able himself to provide for them.

If he expressed the wish that we should act as guardians to his children, we made arrangements by which they should be placed in a comfortable home in the country where we knew they would receive every care and attention. The separation allowance was paid over to us and weekly payments were sent to those temporarily responsible for the welfare of the children, who were visited periodically by one of our visitors for the purpose of seeing that the children were being well looked after, and a report concerning each individual case was received at our offices from time to time and the father advised.

Unfortunately it was not only through the death of the mothers, but often through their bad conduct, that the children had to be taken away and similar provision made for them. Since the War ended many of these men have returned to Canada, and we have, by arrangement with them, sent the children to Liverpool and had them placed in the charge of the Canadian Y.W.C.A. conductress on the boat. Whenever possible, arrangements are made whereby they travel on the same boat as the father so that they may arrive in Canada at the same time.

There have been a considerable number of cases where the men have returned to Canada and left their wives in this country, but, thanks to the help we have received from the Canadian Patriotic Fund, it has been possible in many instances to trace the husband and find out his reasons for having deserted his wife. In the meantime we make her an allowance until we receive the answer to our enquiries from Canada and are then able to decide what is best for her future welfare.

**Deserted
Wives.**

In some cases the husband has been induced to make a home for his wife and arrangements have been made for her to go out to Canada to him.

Where the husband cannot be traced or refuses to have his wife with him, our object is to get the women into a position as quickly as possible where they can be made self-supporting, generally in the same employment as they were in previous to marriage. Where there are children the same policy is pursued; but, of course, the position is more difficult, and more financial assistance is necessary.

We have had, unfortunately, a considerable number of bigamous marriages to deal with. Many men, although married, enlisted in Canada as bachelors and then married again in this country. Frequently under such circumstances the wife in Canada was not drawing separation allowance, so that the records in this country showed him as a single man. A bigamous marriage was then contracted, and the man claimed and received the separation allowance for his wife in England. In other cases these bigamous marriages have been made possible by the man persuading the woman he proposed to marry in England that the reason she could not get separation allowance was either that his mother was receiving it or that, having married without his commanding officer's

**Bigamous
Cases.**

permission, he had forfeited his claim to separation allowance.

It will be realised that these cases present considerable difficulty ; but in many instances we have been able to bring the responsibility home to the man, and we have asked for part of his gratuity to be given to his " second wife." We consider that this is the most effective way to deal with the man, as the difficulty of having him returned to this country to be put on his trial for bigamy will be readily appreciated. Here, as in the case of deserted wives, we aim at making the women self-supporting.

**Illegitimate
Children.**

Owing to the large force of soldiers stationed in England it will be clear to any person that there must be a large number of illegitimate children. The number of such cases brought to our notice up to the present is, approximately, 600. In a good many of these cases there has been insufficient proof of parentage, and many others have had to be struck out owing to the previous conduct of the mother. A large number of cases are still being dealt with at this office, and it is only reasonable to suppose that for another few months there will be many more which will require the most careful and thorough investigation. Where the necessary evidence of parentage is available but the man has been killed, the child is eligible for pension, and cases of this sort are sent forward to the Pension Authorities. In every instance we try to get the mother to keep the child with her, and we make financial provision for her until she is able to return to the work she has been doing previously. It often happens that we are able to find somebody to look after the child in the mother's home or in a creche while she goes out to work during the daytime.

In cases of this sort we give sufficient money to pay the person looking after the child until the mother herself is

able to meet this extra expense out of her increased earnings. All these cases are regularly visited. We try to trace the man with a view to bringing home to him the responsibility he has left in this country, and it has happened that in some instances, thanks greatly to the assistance we have received from workers of the Canadian Patriotic Fund, that the man has been quite ready to marry the woman.

In some cases—where the mother has died or deserted the child, and for similar reasons—it has been found necessary for us to find a home for the child where it can be brought up in proper surroundings. It seems to us that by next spring we shall probably know the exact number of children for whom we shall require to find homes, and we think that the earliest opportunity should be taken to send them to the Dominion of Canada in order that they may grow up with the real Canadian mind and outlook and become good citizens.

In all necessitous cases of this kind brought to our notice we have been able to help them with money provided by the National Relief Fund, and our visitors have seen that the women have had the necessary care and attention given to them. **Confinement Cases.**

Thanks to the extreme kindness of the authorities at Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital, very many cases have been provided for in that institution, and we wish to express our gratitude for all they have done on behalf of these women.

It will be readily understood that there are many cases of venereal disease, which constitute one of the most serious and painful problems of our social work and need very great experience to deal with. **Venereal Disease.**

These could not have been successfully dealt with had it not been for the extreme generosity and unvarying

kindness of some of the leaders of our medical profession in Harley Street.

We assisted these unhappy sufferers by paying the expenses of their treatment, and had the satisfaction of seeing many of them cured. In this connection we would like to express our extreme indebtedness to the great kindness and skill of J. H. Herring, Esq., M.D., 50, Harley Street, and Dr. Teale of the University College Hospital, who never once turned down a case we sent to them. It is impossible to over-estimate the far-reaching beneficial effects of their work, done so unselfishly for the ultimate benefit of that portion of humanity suffering from this terrible scourge.

**Buxton
Discharge
Depot.**

It became necessary to arrange for relief work amongst the dependents at the Dépôt at Buxton, and Mrs. Burrington Ham, of the Y.W.C.A., took charge of it, and our sincere thanks are due to her and her staff for their successful efforts on behalf of the dependents.

The men also had many anxious enquiries to make with respect to wives and families who were not going to Buxton but going straight through to Liverpool to take the ship.

This side of the work was undertaken by Major Bruce Hunter, M.C., the Senior Chaplain, and after he left for Canada, by Captain Pickup, and representatives attended all sailings from Liverpool. The two offices worked harmoniously together, and the greatest praise is due to those in charge of the work at Buxton.

Colonel Hanson (the officer in command, Buxton) and his staff have most generously co-operated with us all through and offered every facility for carrying on the work. Without their kind interest and help it would have been impossible to have undertaken the work so successfully.

When, owing to local strikes and shortage of shipping, great difficulty was experienced in providing the necessary accommodation for those detained in Liverpool, Miss Agatha Cassells, of the Canadian Y.W.C.A., very kindly went to that port and organised things there so satisfactorily that the dependents were well cared for and assisted in every way.

The Y.W.C.A. very kindly undertook the arrangements whereby a lady travelled on each boat train from Buxton to Liverpool, and a conductress on each ship from Liverpool to Canada, to see to the convenience and comfort of the dependents whilst travelling.

When the general demobilisation commenced we suggested to Colonel Blaylock, C.B.E., Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross, that they should open a hostel at Buxton for wives and dependents of Canadian soldiers who were at the Canadian Discharge Depôt at Buxton, in order that they might be near to their husbands and also to facilitate sending them to Liverpool together that their journey back to Canada might be more pleasant and easy. By arrangements made between Colonel Blaylock and ourselves, we undertook, after the Canadian Red Cross had taken and equipped Balmoral House for this purpose, the responsibility of this work.

Nine hundred and four women have passed through the hostel since it was opened in April last, 21,465 meals have been served, and the charge has been 2s. 6d. per day, which included everything. Thanks to the able management of Mrs. Gordon, aided by the excellent efforts of the whole staff, this work has been carried on without any loss.

What we have tried to do was to help these soldiers' wives to be thoroughly comfortable at a time when Buxton was so crowded and food so expensive that, if they

went into rooms on their own account, they generally had to pay 17s. 6d. for a room per week without food.

**Union Jack
Hostel.**

It would have been necessary to have had a hostel in London also, had it not been for the generous assistance given at all times by the Union Jack Hostel, Waterloo Road, carried on under the able management of Mrs. Myatt assisted by her very efficient secretary, Miss Morriss. We are deeply indebted to both these ladies, who, throughout the War, have always helped, frequently at a moment's notice, in taking cases of Canadian soldiers and their dependents who found themselves stranded in London, or who found it necessary to stay a night or longer when passing through or when called to London on business connected with their husband's service.

**Detention
Cases.**

In the early days of the War great hardship frequently occurred to the wives of soldiers who, from some cause or other, had been placed in detention, when all allowance to the wife was stopped. However, when the hardship occasioned by this was brought to the notice of Major Hayward, of the Pay and Allowance Board, he brought the matter before Brigadier-General Ross, C.M.G., Paymaster-General, and machinery was set up whereby we were able to help the wives of these men with monetary grants and thereby saving a considerable amount of distress and hardship.

In addition to the help thus given, our visitors kept in constant touch with these wives during the period of the husband's imprisonment.

**Cases of
Hardship in
connection
with
Pensions.**

Many cases of distress have been caused by the long delays which have occurred in connection with the settlement of pension claims. When these have been brought to our notice we have given temporary help with money and assisted them in other directions.

There are a number of cases of men who have been discharged in this country, and of those discharged in Canada who have returned to this country to take up positions here, who need a grant of money for outfits and similar purposes before their gratuity money can be paid. In such cases an arrangement is in existence between this office and the War Service Gratuity Office by which, in certain cases, money may be advanced where it can be shown that it will greatly benefit the man. This arrangement, thanks to the kind co-operation of Major Thomson, officer in charge of the Gratuity Office, has worked very smoothly and to the great benefit of the men concerned, although it will be understood that in working this arrangement this office has, from time to time, a large sum of money out on loan which is eventually recovered with the payment of the gratuities.

There are numerous other cases, not included under the headings given above, which come to this office for assistance, which, in many cases, is sorely needed. For instance, there are cases of the mothers of soldiers in this country who have been receiving the assigned pay during the War and whose sons have now been returned to the Dominions. These cases are naturally left in a very difficult plight until the son is able to send his mother some money or the gratuity which he receives can be transferred here for her benefit. In all these cases the machinery which we have mentioned in the foregoing Report is used in some shape or other, and it will be obvious to anyone accustomed to social work how much we are indebted to all those who have assisted us in the different offices of the O.M.F.C.

There are also cases of wives who, for some reason or other, have been unable to return to Canada with their husbands. In many instances these women are not in a

fit state to travel for some months, and all cases of this sort brought to our notice are treated in the most sympathetic way possible, according to the circumstances in which the difficulties have arisen.

**System of
lending
Money.**

We have most successfully made loans to the dependents in a large number of cases, and in this way the money in our special fund has been loaned out and returned a great many times over, to the great advantage of the dependents.

Before closing this Report it is my great pleasure to record with my deepest thanks the whole-hearted support I have always received from the staff of this office. The rush of work has been constant and the cases very difficult; but, thanks to the real goodwill that has been shown by everybody, letters have always been answered the same day as they arrived and there have been very few complaints. To Mr. Osborne (the manager of my office) I owe a special debt of thanks. Since the first days of the War we have worked together with the greatest harmony, and his special knowledge, added to his great kindness and hard work, have earned the respect of all—dependents and fellow-workers alike.

The visitors, who frequently have to work late in the evening and in wet weather, have never shown anything but the greatest zeal and tact in dealing with these cases and deserve especial praise.

I am hoping that this Report may reach many of the dependents and, if it does, I hope it will interest them.

Notwithstanding that about 50,000 cases have been dealt with after the most thorough investigation, the total cost to date to Canadian funds (apart from office expenses) has been only £4,038, the balance of the cost of this work having been provided for by the National Relief Fund or from a special fund.

We trust that the facts related in this Report will interest the Canadian public as to the social work it has been our pleasure to do for their kin resident in our midst during the period of the Great War. I sincerely hope that when this work is handed over to others at Christmas to manage, it will continue its usefulness in the same way that it has hitherto.

R. B. BARRON.

PARLIAMENT MANSIONS.

ORCHARD STREET,

VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,

October 20th, 1919.