

BATLEY'S WAR MEMORIAL UNVEILED

BY GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON.

DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF GREAT & HISTORIC OCCASION.

TENDER HOMAGE TO 782 BATLEY LADS WHO FELL IN SACRED CAUSE.

With mingled feelings of pride and sorrow the people of Batley assembled in thousands last Saturday afternoon to pay tender homage to the 782 brave lads who for love of home and -county and in the sacred cause of justice made the sublime sacrifice, and in whose honour, there was to be unveiled in the centre of the town a memorial typifying that bereavement, the soreness of which time has not yet healed though five years have passed. Widows made their way to the Memorial Garden on the Market Hill to lay their floral tributes at the foot of the dignified monument erected in the midst; mothers and fathers who had given their gallant sons mingled their tears as they beheld the swathed figure of 'the rugged warrior with bowed head and arms "reversed, bending, as it were," with dignified calmness over his fallen comrades; and heroes of many fights, with the symbols of,, their bravery pinned to their breasts, saluted the figure which typified in their minds the crowded days of death and glory in which they had had their share, but from which they had happily returned. There, were present in hundreds the men and women who had "held the ' fort" at home in those terrible days of nervous and mental strain; and there were in evidence the children who were having given them that day the answer to the old Biblical question: "What meaneth this stone?"

Every inch of ground on the wide, open space seemed full of people, and the masses extended down the hill to Commercial Street and Branch Road. The grounds attached to the Congregational Church close by were full, and every point of vantage within sight of the memorial was occupied by expectant folk who awaited the appearance of the eminent British soldier who, was to formally unveil the monument. Shops had been temporarily closed and an atmosphere of quietness pervaded the Market Place, broken only by the strains of Batley Old Band as the musicians, under Bandmaster Hickman, interpreted "Rimington" and other well-known compositions that seemed suitable to the feelings of the Moment. Outside the central enclosure seats had been provided in one place for members of the Town Council and officials and their ladies, in another for members of the War Memorial Committee, and in addition space was specially reserved for the relatives and dependents of the dead heroes.

In a sanded square close to the path kept open from the Town Hall stood a guard of honour furnished by the. 4th Battalion (Territorials), K.O.Y.L.I., and not far away were representative ex- Servicemen, wearing their war honours, while at other points were assembled in uniform members of the men's and women's local divisions, of the, St. John Ambulance Brigade, and the helmeted members of the Fire Brigade. Nurses in uniform typified the splendid work done for our wounded soldiers during the most terrible war the world has known, and the rising generation, full of patriotism and high ideals, was represented by the Boy Scouts and the Girl, Guides.

A Brave and Eminent Soldier.

The hush deepened as General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O., A.D.C., issued from the Town Hall to proceed to the unveiling. He had arrived in Batley by the train from London; due at 2:10 pm., and had been met by the mayor (Councillor Hamilton Crothers) and the Town Clerk (Major T E Craik, M.C.). He wore the uniform of the Gordon Highlanders, and was accompanied from the Town Hall by the Mayor, Town Clerk, Alderman Ben Turner, M.P., Mr. Theodore C Taylor, J.P., Rev. F. E. Lowe,

M.A. (Vicar of Batley), Rev. W.- Cooper (Mayor's Chaplain), Rev. C. A. Charter, RA. (President, of - Batley Free Church Council). Alderman '1'. Western (Deputy Mayor), Alderman David Stubley, Alderman H. North, and Lieutenant-Colonel James Walker, D.S.O. (Mirfield). Led by the Mace Bearer (Mr. P. _Lyon), the party moved, towards the memorial site. They paused before the guard of honour, who sprang to attention and sloped arms. Captain O. W. Appleyard was in command, and with him were Lieut. W. T. Akeroyd and Second-Lieut. G. W. Hirst, bearing the Regimental Colours. General Hamilton passed down the lines and inspected the men, frequently stopping to have a few words with those whose war medals betokened distinguished service. Close by were grouped Colonel H. S. Kaye. D.S.O., M.C. (Commandant of the 4th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I.), Captain Bradley Williams (Adjutant), and Lieutenant H. E. Butterfield from the Depot at Pontefract. Another present in uniform was Major j: P. Critchley, of Batley.

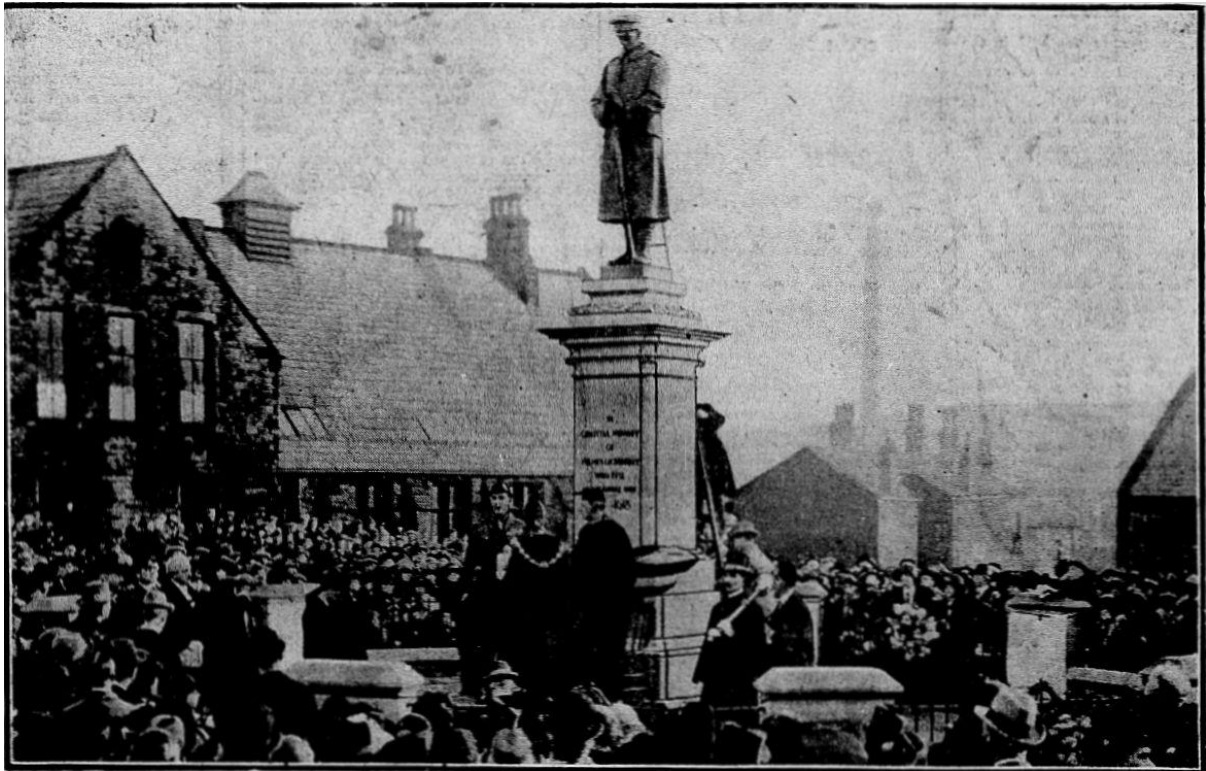
A Great and Touching Event.

This little ceremony over, Sir Ian and the Mavor and the official group passed within the enclosure for the great and touching event of the afternoon. Those who took part in the service were accommodated on a platform facing Commercial Street. The Band struck up the opening bars of that fine hymn of the Christian Church, " O God. our help in ages past" and the familiar words were sung with great earnestness by thousands of people, led by the musicians and a united choir under the direction of Councillor C. H. Fearnside. Then there fell a solemn hush as the Rev. C. A. Charter read the beautiful prayer from the special form of service, appealing to the Almighty that the Memorial Day "might be the beginning of new and better days to us all". The Scripture reading by the Vicar was taken from the first seven verses of the twenty-first chapter of Revelations, containing the touching phrase: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The Unveiling.

The act of unveiling formed the central ceremony on an occasion long to be remembered. Addressing the distinguished soldier on his right, the Mayor said: "We regret it is not possible to tell you exactly how many gallant men went from Batley to the war, but 4,000 would be a modest computation. Of those who went 782 laid down their lives for their country. This monument is not designed to glorify war, nor even to symbolise victory. It is set here as a simple tribute to the memory of men who loved peace and laid down their lives in order that they might win peace for the world. We count ourselves happy, therefore, that we have one to unveil the memorial who has not only made for himself an illustrious name in the military annals of our country, but has endeared himself in the hearts a man because of his devotion to the cause of peace. The erection of this memorial has been a labour of love to us, and now I ask you to unveil it and address us."

"To the glory of God and in memory of the heroes of Batley I unveil this memorial," said Sir, Ian, as he turned and pulled the cord which caused the Union Jack to flutter down in the breeze and expose the dignified, khaki-clad figure in mourning posture, whose hat bears the badge of the famous K.O.Y.L.I. regiment. Looking up, the people saw the figure and realised all that it symbolised, and read the words engraved on the base: -- "In grateful memory of the men of this town who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918." Stepping down from the platform the General passed round the central enclosure and removed from each boundary pier the white cloth with which the bronze tablet containing the names of the fallen was veiled. Pausing in front of each, he untied the red ribbon which allowed the cloth to fall, and stepping back, saluted the dead. Tn this. way the twelve tablets were exposed. Expeditiously the unveiling material was removed under -the supervision of Borough Engineer (Mr. Harold Hall), who had charge of these arrangements.



Sir Ian Hamilton's soldierly speech

In clear ringing tones, Sir Ian Hamilton addressed the vast concourse, only a limited proportion of whom, however, could hear his great, soldierly speech.

"This great town of Batley." He said, "went into the Great War with a will. The men went forth into battle; the women wove khaki. Miles and miles of khaki cloth poured out of Batley, and the fighting men wore it, fought in it, died in, and were buried in it. So here today we have unveiled a figure of one of these brave Yorkshire fighters set in a ring of twelve pillars inscribed with the names of his 800 dead comrades. Is it all to end there? Not so! Let me then spend my few moments not so much in lamentations as in taking stock of our sacrifices and in trying to think how we can save our children from any like disaster. Above all, let me try and think for you what we soldiers and ex-soldiers could do, if we were to join together to close down for ever and ever the chances of another five years period of unveiling war memorials. If the ex- soldiers of the world were joined together, we could do it. If half the ex-soldiers of the world-were joined together, we could do it. Our government wants to wait till certain foreign currencies which are now quoted in astronomical figures get back again to normal. That's putting the cart before the horse. It's bad politics which are putting the currencies wrong; not the currencies which are getting into the way of good politics.

Allied Ex-Servicemen Can Save Central Europe.

"We have a union of ex-Servicemen of Allied countries called Fidac—Federation interallies des anciens combattants" --The Federation of old War veterans, it would be splendid beyond Words if we could get the French Legion to share our views, but that, for the moment, is, out of the picture. But even if only we and the ex-Servicemen could work for, one month in cordial co-operation, we could convince these same Legionaries and -- even' at the eleventh hour—save Central Europe. The American Legion is an enormous body, with a small' head. It consists of one million paying members. When' last we talked with them we found them intensely Sympathetic to our misfortunes and willing to modify their own views to meet ours. Mind you, I said modify. They could not change them -- not in a minute; and those

views of theirs are clearly favourable to the present war along the Rhine than are ours. I don't blame them for I can tell you the reason.

"The French are infinitely more skilled in propaganda than any other nation, as one of their best writers has said, 'In the war of propaganda, France showed that she stood above all others as an intellectual nation. It is true. In no country have they shown that so wonderfully as the States. The French made some bad mistakes at the Washington Conference and were falling into disfavour. Their government understood that and resolved to put it right. They knew that the people of the United States, and that especially the Legionaries of the United States were young, romantic and impressionable. America suffers from a shortage of home-brewed romance; therefore, she can be carried off her feet by it.

Romance and Diplomacy.

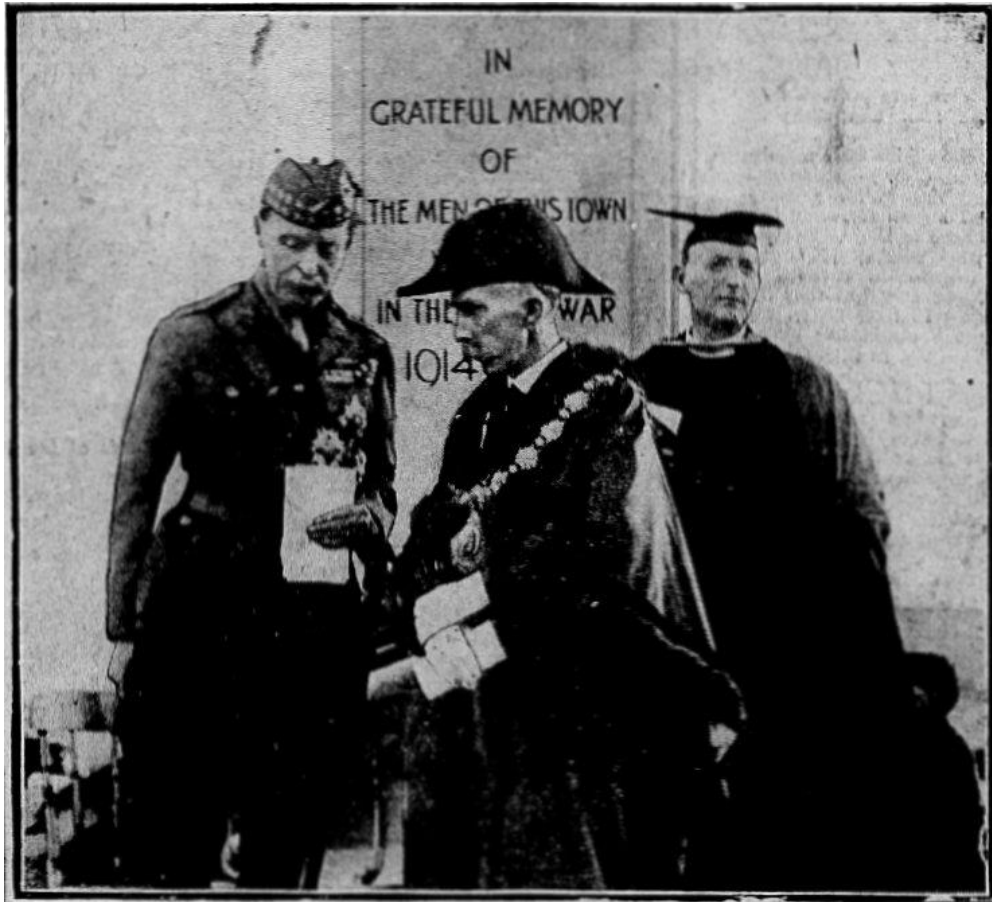
"So the French aimed with their emissaries at romance. First, they sent, Pere Joffre, overflowing with goodness, solidity, and all the best qualities of respectable family' man, who had been shovelled by Fate into the most extraordinary romantic position. Secondly, they sent Foch—the greatest soldier in the world -- original, gay and looking and acting the part. The last and most successful was Gouraud, a very fine soldier. He did the business. He brought back the American Legionaries to M. Poincare. I know that gallant soldier well. He served six months under my command at the Dardanelles, so I should do so. A British Propaganda Agency would have put any politician or business man before him on their list. Though a soldier of the very first rank, sound and clear headed, Gouraud is not brilliant. He cannot speak one word of English. But the French were glad he could not spoil things by trying to speak. They saw the romance of Gouraud. He was the Lion of the Ardennes. He was the hero of fight after fight at the Dardanelles. He was the man who broke his ankle, dislocated his hip and was blown sky high by a shell fired from the Plains of Troy whilst he was visiting his wounded, and, finally he was the hero of Rheims. So the bands played, the flags waved, and Gouraud advanced, limping still from his wounds and with his empty sleeve hanging by his side. He ejaculated, "Lafayette!"; "La Gloire!!"; "La France!!!". That's all; and he had them. (Laughter) He was bound to do so for he's a superb figure of a man.

" But spells of that sort do not last for ever. Sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, the American Legion and the British Legion will see eye to eye on this carnival of hate, greed and fear which is paving the way direct to another dreadful war. Then and not till then shall we feel that we have paid our full debt of gratitude to these heroes of Batley who fell that we, standing on their bodies, might reach up a step nearer to the stars." (Applause)

Beautiful Prayer of Dedication.

A prayer of 'dedication was read by the Mayor's Chaplain. The petition was in most impressive and imposing language, and one paragraph is especially worthy of quotation:

"As the prosperous man looks upon this memorial may he feel his heart touched with a vast compassion for the maimed, the widow and the orphaned. As the bereaved look upon it may the leaden sky break for them above the bowed and weary earth, revealing the infinite blue beyond the gloom. When the doubting one, in his soul's bitterness, is tempted to ask, 'To what purpose is this waste?' may this monument help him to remember that the shed blood cries unto Thee, that much of the world's work is done by the departed, that among the forces on the earth there is none more potent than that of those we call the dead. And when, in after ages, little children shall ask 'What meaneth this stone?' may this monument make them the spiritual heirs of the vast wealth of idealism their names enshrine."



Mr T C Taylor, speaking for the War Memorial Committee, asked the Mayor, on behalf of the Corporation of Batley, to accept the Memorial and retain custody of it for the future. "The words we have heard today," he said, "must have gone home to our hearts, I rejoice with you that this occasion should not have been used for the purpose of fanning the flames of discord in the world, but that the great soldier who has honoured us with his presence should have added one more to the efforts of all men and women of good-will, are everywhere making it a time of peace, good-will and love among men soon come. May God grant that."

The Mayor replied: On behalf of the Corporation, I gratefully accept this Memorial. In sympathy with those who seated their dear ones to go to the war and in pride in our gallant townsmen. we shall regard it as a sacred trust ever to maintain it.

Inspired by the fine sentiments addressed to them, the people of Batley gave voice with great fervour to that touching hymn, " For all the Saints who from their labours rest." The familiar words echoed round the wide, open space, and the sunshine from the western sky, welcome after the dull dreariness of the earlier hours, lit up the scene as the people sang: —

" The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.

Alleluia!"

A Wealth of Beautiful Wreaths.

When the last triumphant "Alleluia!" had died away, Sir Ian and the Mayor stepped on one side, and the Mayoress entered the enclosure and laid at the foot of the memorial a beautiful wreath, in the name of Councillor Crothers and herself, as the chief citizens of the borough. Alderman Ben Turner similarly placed a floral tribute in position and he was followed by Major T. E. Craik. Then came a stream of folk with handsome wreaths and tributes in various designs, all intended to convey the deepest reverence and honour for the brave men—husbands, fathers and sons—who had made the great sacrifice and gained "the victor's crown of gold." Not all could be deposited in the time allotted, but even then, the base of the monument seemed to be rising from a bed of choice flowers and foliage.

The last few minutes of the day's ceremonial were full of deep emotion. At the word of command, the guard of honour presented arms, and the roll of the drum was followed by the "Last Post" by K.O.Y.L.I. buglers. As the notes of the bugles rang out Sir Ian Hamilton remained at the salute and the Mayor likewise, while the people stood with bowed heads. One minute of silence was followed as a tribute to the dead, and then the "Reveille" was sounded, and the drooping Union Jack on the Town Hall was run up to full mast.

The order of service ended with the benediction pronounced by the Mayor's Chaplain and the singing by the people of one verse of the National Anthem.

Before returning to the Town Hall Sir Ian Hamilton was delighted to walk along the ranks of the ex-Servicemen, who proudly pulled themselves up to attention to greet the renowned warrior. They comprised members of the Batley branches of the British Legion, K.O.Y.L.I. Regimental Association, and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club.

Lieutenant Butterfield, from Pontefract, represented the Regimental Association, and local members included Messrs. C. H. Lawton (hon. sec.), C. J. McCarthy, W. Broadbent, R. Raynor, P. Scanlon, H. Webster, J. Burns, G. Nutton, C. Carr, A. Haigh, H. Healey, and A. Davenport with J. W. Ormsby, V.C.

Batley Ex-Servicemen's Club, was represented by Messrs. F. Moody (president), Edmund Lodge, (vice-president), C. H. Harrison (secretary), J. Kilbride, H. Walker, - F. Parr, H. D. Richardson, . W. Barnes, Herbert Sykes and G. H., Farrar (committee). R. Brearley (steward). V. Ashwell, R. Fisher, P. Roberts, W. Underhill, J. Carney, J. Connell, J. Hughes, W. Chew, C. Audsley, J. Thewlis, A. S. Armitage, A. Whitehead, M. Lamb, C. Bruce, E. Burns and J. H. Walker.

Representatives of Batley Branch of the British Legion included Messrs. J. H. Dawson, A. Pickles, H. Goldthorpe, F. Goldthorpe, G. Driver, R. Stubble, R. Lawton, R. R. Thompson, A. Broom.

Batley's Oldest War Pensioner.

One veteran in attendance was Mr. W. Ashwell, the oldest pensioner in Batley, who had a brief chat with the General. Ashwell discovered that he was a soldier four years before Sir Ian Hamilton. He joined up in 1864, and served in Afghanistan.

The Guard of Honour saluted as Sir Ian passed on to the Town Hall to spend a short social period with the Mayor and Mayoress and their party. Later the General, before journeying to Grassington as the guest of Mr. T. C. Taylor, had a look in at the ex-Servicemen's Club in Bradford Road, where he was given a great reception. With him were the Mayor, Town Clerk, Alderman Ben Turner, Mr. T. C. Taylor, Rev. Hugh Jenkins, and Colonel Walker.

Letters of regret at their inability to be present at the unveiling were received by the Town Clerk from Colonel J. D'Ecoke (Chief Constable of the West Riding), Mrs. John Stubble, Councillor and Mrs. W. O.

R. Holton (Birstall), and Mr. Author Jackson, of Staincliffe, a member of, the National Council of the British Legion.

A Simple Yet Dignified Memorial.

General Sir Ian Hamilton was particularly appreciative of the appropriate character and design of the Batley memorial. He repeated to a "News" representative the words of satisfaction he uttered to the Mayor as the wreaths were being laid at the foot of the monument on Saturday: " Absolutely simple and yet fine," said he. " It is dignified, and that the soldier should be surrounded by his comrades is very appropriate."

The monument was erected by Messrs. Wright and Sons, Ltd., sculptors, of Bradford. The base on Bolton Wood stone, stands 13ft. 6in. high, and the: cast bronze figure of the soldier surmounting it is 7ft. 6in. in height. The dwarf wall and wrought-iron rails forming the memorial enclosure is in the form of a circle, with a diameter of 40feet. Wrought-iron gates are provided at four points, and in the encircling. wall are twelve stone piers with bronze tablets attached containing the names of the fallen. In round figures the cost of the monument and enclosure is £2000. The whole forms the centre of what will be tastefully laid out gardens, the cost of which is to be born by the rate payers. These gardens have been planned and designed by the Borough Engineer (Mr. H. L. Hall) who has acted as hon. architect to the War Memorial Committee, Ex- Service members of Batley Corporation Officials Guild acted as stewards during the unveiling ceremony.

MAGNIFICENT KLORAL TRIBUTES.

It is difficult to give anything like an adequate list of the wreaths which have this week formed a lovely spectacle at the foot of the memorial. The cards from some have fallen and others have been obliterated by rain, and in -a good many cases offerings of bouquets had no names attached to them. Specially interesting were the following tributes from leading men and institutions--

Councillor and Mrs. Hamilton Crothers (Mayor. and Mayoress), in grateful remembrance.

In memory of the brave heroes who died in the Great War. War to end War. May their sacrifice not be in vain. From Ben Turner, M.P., and Mrs. Turner, J.P.

In proud memory of their fallen comrades. From Headquarters, Regimental Association (K.O.Y.L.I.)

Lieutenant- Colonel H. S. Kaye, D.S.O., officers, non-commissioned officers and men, 4th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

In affectionate remembrance of our fallen comrades. From officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Batley Detachment, K.O.Y.L.I

(Names of the fallen were then listed along with cards bearing the names of who sent tributes.)

SIR IAN HAMILTON AT THE EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB.

A great reception was given Sir Ian Hamilton when he visited Batley Ex-Servicemen's Club on Saturday evening. He was accompanied by the Mayor (Councillor H. Crothers), Town Clerk (Major T. F. Craik, M.C.), Mr. Ben Turner, M.P., Mr. T. C. Taylor, JP., Alderman T. Western, Rev. Hugh Jenkins, and Colonel James Walker, D.S.O. The men were lined up in the Club, and gave the distinguished soldier a true. Yorkshire welcome, and sang " He's Jolly Good Fellow." General Hamilton spent a pleasant half-hour smoking and chatting with the men. A brief speech- making interlude was presided over by Mr. F. Moody, and a few appropriate remarks were offered by the Mayor, Alderman Western and Rev. Hugh Jenkins.

General Hamilton expressed sympathy with those who were unemployed and trusted times would shortly be more propitious for them. As one associated with the British Legion he also hoped to see, ere long, a combination of the various ex-Servicemen's organisations. This would be a bigger safeguard against war, and would be best in the interests of the men themselves. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Ben Turner said he had received appeals pressing the claims of the unemployed ex-Servicemen, and he agreed with the suggestion that there should be a loan £200,000.000

or £300.000,000—just as war loans were raised—to help save the men from demoralisation and despair. Relief work schemes should be set afoot immediately, and everyone, irrespective of creed or politics, should be set to work to restore civilisation.

Extracted from the Batley News Saturday, November 3, 1923.