

## ZCR164/1 MINUTES AND REPORTS

AUG 1914 –MARCH 1915

### **SUMMARY-**

In the organisation of the Council of Social Welfare, the main issues that seemed to occur were of disputes as to the composition of committee members (see critique by the National Union of Railwaymen in Scheme sub-committee report 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1914), the jurisdiction of cases with the S. S. F. A, who despite problems with the inefficient handling of cases initially refused the help of the Council, and of the employment, or rather the unemployment, of women which was later noted to be most greatly affected by consequence of the war than with men. As well as considering the adoption of a training scheme to prepare women and girls for work, the Women's and Girls' Employment sub-committee distributed employment in the form of aid via the home-worker's scheme in Mr H F Brown's rent-free donation of Edgar House. In it, clothes were commissioned and made for distribution to the men at war and for those needy cases at home. However, despite efforts to distribute employment opportunities, home-workers were reported by the Board of Trade representative to have refused alternate situations of employment later offered by the Local Labour Exchange. What's more, the Juvenile Advisory sub-committee reported that some girls/ women refused employment offered to them not because of previous engagements but because they considered such positions as below their 'social status'. Other issues as to how far the Council should go with the distribution of aid, coping with those that resisted it, and the establishment of limitations of said aid were also under continual consideration during the first 7 months of administration.

### **NOTES -**

6<sup>th</sup> Aug

Circular addressed to the mayor by Local Government Board with reference to the formation of a local representative committee for dealing with any distress from the war.

12<sup>th</sup> Aug

#### **Executive Committee**

First meeting held. Mayor appointed Chairman. Mr H W Dodge, City Treasurer, to act as honorary treasurer to committee and Town Clerk Mr J H Dickson to act as Honorary Secretary to the committee.

13<sup>th</sup> Aug

Appeal to 'assist the National Relief Fund by drawing attention of their employees to the objects of the fund and by collecting subscriptions periodically from the employees'.

Scheme and Unemployment committees formed.

14<sup>th</sup> Aug

#### **Scheme Sub-Committee**

Mr H. F. Brown appointed Chairman

A draft scheme prepared by Mr Hugh Gamon for the 'registration and for the organisation of relief committee's' was considered.

### **Workmen's collection Sub-committee**

Rev. F W Anderson Chairman.

Fire brigade to be requested to undertake collections on behalf of the fund

17<sup>th</sup> Aug

### **Employment of Labour Sub-Committee**

The Sheriff (Mr John Dodd Esq.) appointed Chairman

The Superintendent of Labour Exchange (Mr G J R Crosby) reports that amount of unemployment is not great. Resolved that the Mayor is to issue a circular to employers requesting 1) they will endeavour to keep staff in work 2) if there is a scarcity of trade/ materials, the earning must be reduced and staff placed upon short time, or labour divided amongst employees over dismissal 3) that employers co-operate with the sub-committee.

19<sup>th</sup> Aug

### **Scheme SC**

Scheme for the registration of assistance amended and recommended for the approval of the General Committee.

Thanks given to Mr Hugh Gamon for his valuable service in drafting the scheme.

Mr H F Brown offered to be responsible for the salary of the General Secretary for a period of 6 months – Miss Doulton Edwards considered for position

27<sup>th</sup> Aug

Letter from Branch Secretary of National Union of Railwaymen 'protest' against the 'composition' of the Executive Committee and ask that at least two more labour representatives be added to the central committee and any sub-committees have two representatives of Trade Unions.

Subscription list amounted to £3670

3rd Sept

### **Relief Cub-Committee Report**

Rev. Canon Cooper Scott appointed Chairman; Rev. Canon Chambers appointed V. Chairman

Monetary Aid Case Distinctions Operations: affirms that relief is limited to the duration of the War; aid will be given via vouchers that can be cashed at the Town Hall.

Committee will not take action on cases under the care/ jurisdiction of the S. S. F. A (Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association)

14<sup>th</sup> Sept

The Sheriff (Mr John Dodd) to act, if needed, as local correspondent to the Intelligence Department of the Local Government Board).

17<sup>th</sup> Sept

**Relief Sub-committee meeting**

Felt that the SSFA would more adequately deal with cases if they cooperated with District Committees.

24<sup>th</sup> Sept

**Relief Sub-Committee**

Offer made with the Childrens' Care Committee for cooperation

First reported case considered and approved for relief in the minutes. No name specified.

28<sup>th</sup> Sept

**Registration Sub-committee report**

Card-indexing for identification and registration system approved as set up by the Civil guild of Help  
Proposed to be called The Chester Council of Social Welfare.

Resolved that all cases are to pass through central office and registration from District committees.

Mr W R C Clarke appointed by Local Government Board as their Inspector.

Resolved that, under normal circumstances, relief will not be given to men physically fit or with age of enlistment, and to those not usually resident in the city.

Relief given will be monetary unless suspect to be misused; vouchers will be given which need to be signed by the General Secretary and can be cashed at the Town hall.

Reported that only women's labour seems to be 'dislocated' because of the war (chief areas of unemployment: charwomen and domestic servants).

The Sheriff (Mr John Dodd) appointed as Local Hon. Correspondent for the Intelligence Department of the Local Government Board.

29<sup>th</sup> Sept

**Employment of Women Sub-Committee**

First committee meeting held in the Town Hall at 3pm

1<sup>st</sup> Oct

**Executive Committee meeting**

Representative Hon. Secretary of the SSFA, Mrs Yolland, resigned from her position in various committees. Mrs Crookenden appointed Hon. Secretary of SSFA.

Letter read dated 10<sup>th</sup> Sept reporting the 'inadequacy of local and voluntary effort to deal with the dependents of the H. M Forces.

From circular letter 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept, from Board of Agriculture and Fisheries suggesting the cultivation of allotments as a means of relieving distress by adding to worker's own food stores resolved to be brought before the Small Holdings and Allotments Committee.

Advertising and subscriptions: read from letter 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept, that advertisement for the National Fund has been free of charge. The 'Chester Observer' and 'Chester Chronicle' advise that 2d. be paid per line.

Deputy Mayor (Mr H B Dutton) appointed as representative of Exec. Committee on the SSFA Chester Branch.

9<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Women's Employment Sub-Committee**

Sub-committee formed to draft a scheme to deal with possible unemployment in women: The Mayoress, Mrs Redman, Miss Taylor, Miss Doulton-Edwards, Miss Joyce and Mrs Gladstone appointed.

12<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Minor Sub-committee of Women's Employment Sub-committee**

First meeting held; Miss Joyce appointed Chairman in Mayoress's absence.

**Relief Sub-committee**

Duke of Westminster offers, through Aldermon Egerton Gilbert, gifts of rabbits for needy cases.

19<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Relief Sub-committee**

Traders warned not to offer credit, only monetary transactions to prevent the increase of debt H. M Forces will face upon their return to England.

20<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Registration Sub-committee**

Reported that some Church of England clergy held aloof to participation of the scheme.

23<sup>rd</sup> Oct

**Women's and Girl's employment Sub-committee**

Area of effect is resolved to be within a 4 mile radius of Chester Cross.

4<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Women's and Girl's employment Sub-committee**

Juvenile advisory committee report that some girls are refusing work because of 'social status'.

5<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Relief Sub-committee**

Chester Municipal Charities Trustee refuse to cooperate with Chester Council of Social Welfare.

**Unemployment Sub-committee**

Town Clerk to approach the County Territorial Association with the intention to obtain contracts for making Territorial Uniforms being placed in the City.

Belgian Refugees: read letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov from Secretary of the Government of Belgium Refugee's Committee stating action should be taken with a view of finding employment for refugees which would not compete with British Labour.

**Scheme Sub-committee**

Mr Hugh Gamon 'outlined scheme for the inauguration of a Council of Social Welfare Constitution.

18<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Scheme Sub-committee**

Proposal of the embodiment of Charity Organisation Society within the constitution of the Council of Social Welfare.

Resolved that arrangements be entered into for the transference of certain cases having a distinct civil issue from the SSFA to the Council of Social Welfare.

25<sup>th</sup> Nov

**Scheme Sub-committee**

St Vincent de Paul Society expresses reluctance to enter the scheme of Mutual Registration.

Letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> Nov concerning Christmas Gifts from the US: a provision of gifts for children of non-commissioned officers and men at the front.

1<sup>st</sup> Dec

**Collections Sub-committee Report**

House to House collections proposed by Mr S H Fleming, Organiser for Dr Barnado's Homes. Collections to take place weekly or monthly by ladies and to be allocated to several War funds.

2<sup>nd</sup> Dec

#### **Scheme Sub-committee**

Resolved that a Clothing Committee be formed to work in association with the Women's and Girl's employment sub-committee.

4<sup>th</sup> Dec

#### **Scheme Sub-committee**

Resolved that no case be closed without prior consultation by Gen. Secretary with the Hon. Secretary of the SSFA.

#### **Employment and Labour Sub-committee**

Reported little change in men's unemployment: greater number of tailors, painters, printers, and masons on either short time or out of work entirely.

Town Clerk reported interest of Colonel Thompson's placing orders of military uniforms locally. Col. Thompson promises to give what he can when other contracts were necessary.

Advised Women's Unemployment Sub-committee to discontinue unless further satisfied that working girls themselves reaped the benefits.

9<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Scheme sub-committee report**

6 meetings held of the scheme sub-committee. It's is concluded that there is need of an Advisory committee which shall carry to completion all duties assigned to the scheme sub-committee and should consist of: Mr. H F Brown, Mr W Vernon, Rev G E M Bennett, Rev. Canon Chambers, Mr H Gamon, Rev Canon S Cooper Scott, Mr A Ayrton, Miss M G Fergusson, M A Matheson, and Mr V Williams.

#### **Relief sub-committee report**

Final scale of relief: decided to revert to the original scale resolved by the sub-committee, not scale advised by the Local government board: 7/6 pw for first adult; 5/- pw for 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent adults; 2/6 pw for each child.

#### **Employment and Labour sub-committee report**

Reported that there is a shortage in the supply of qualified Bakers.

Fire at the Steam Laundry mentioned but not further details given.

Scheme for a workroom training centre for women and young girls under approval by Government committee. Rent free accommodation of 40 girls and women who attend classes in clothing and needlework.

#### **Collections sub-committee**

Reported that, apart from workmen's collections, donations to the National Relief Fund have for the time being practically ceased.

N:D

Present Sheriff Mr W H Griffith invited to Executive committee.

Resolved that subscriptions advertised in newspapers ('Chester Chronicle' and 'Chester Observer') to remain free of charge.

14<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Relief sub-committee**

Consideration of making block grants from the Nation Fund (possibly up to several pounds) to clear obligations of financial debt and to re-establish the family for when soldiers return from the war.

1<sup>st</sup> January 1915

#### **Women's and Girl's Employment sub-committee (Workroom scheme)**

Home-workers to be transferred from the Town Hall to Edgar House which has been kindly lent by Mr H F Brown for the premises of the home-workers scheme.

Applications for the post of Directress and a minor sub-committee consisting of Ms Walley, Mrs Dean, Mrs Redman and Miss Joyce appointed to deal with the application.

14<sup>th</sup> Jan

#### **Relief sub-committee**

Rev. Canon Chambers resigned from Vice Chairman position.

25<sup>th</sup> Jan

#### **Relief sub-committee**

Letter received from the Women's Emergency Corps asking the Council of Social Welfare to become one of the registered collectors for the Corps.

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb

#### **Women's and Girl's Employment sub-committee**

Miss Walkinson is appointed for the position of Directress at a salary of 25/ p.w.

All funds for the home-workers being exhausted, the Town Clerk is asked to convene a Sailor's and Soldier's War Fund grant.

Gas and fuel for the home-workers scheme at Edgar House given at reduced costs.

5th Feb

**Scheme sub-committee**

Mr D L Hewitt resigned as Chair from South District committee; Mr Crane resigns as V. Chairman of Central District committee; Mr Cooper, representative of City Mission on the North District committee resigned; reported that the representative of the Poor Law Guardians has been called up for military service.

Clothing sub-committee members appointed.

16<sup>th</sup> Feb

**Employment and Labour sub-committee**

Trade Union resisting men's employment in trades other than their own specialties.

Lead works erecting new building open an expected 150 posts for bullet-making.

£95 received from the National Relief Fund to cover expenses of the work room for 1 month.

1<sup>st</sup> March

**Relief sub-committee**

Rev. Canon Cooper Scott resigned post as Chair due to his removal from Chester.

3<sup>rd</sup> March

**Women's and Girl's Employment sub-committee**

Board of Trade representative reported that employees at Edgar house had refused situations offered by the Local Labour Exchange.

Mrs Cuffe donates 10/- to workrooms.

4<sup>th</sup> March

**Scheme sub-committee**

Mr Vincent Williams resigns as Secretary to South District committee through lack of leisure.

Scheme for the co-operation of Council of Social Welfare with Charity Organisation Society to be sent for approval of the Council of Social Welfare.

Rev. F W Anderson considered to Chair Relief committee; and the Precanter, Mr Farmer, invited as member of the sub-committee.