

ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW

For Men and Women Blinded on War Service

No. 352A—VOLUME XXXII

SPECIAL HOME EDITION
AUGUST, 1948

PRICE 3d. MONTHLY
(FREE TO ST. DUNSTAN'S MEN)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

EVERY St. Dunstaner will be interested in the intensive Pensions Campaign which the British Legion has recently started and in the three Debates which have taken place in the House of Commons during the past month.

An exceptional amount of Parliamentary time and public attention has been focussed on this matter and every British Legion branch in the country, as well as branches of the Royal Air Forces Association and many kindred bodies are taking an active part including particularly the British Legion in Scotland.

I advise every St. Dunstaner, and, indeed every disabled and partially disabled Service man and woman who has not already done so, to join his local British Legion branch to keep in touch with events and help the campaign forward.

In view of this intensive activity we are publishing a special August edition of the ST. DUNSTAN'S REVIEW to bring our readers full information of all that is happening and in particular, to give certain St. Dunstaners the background of knowledge which is required for an important decision which they must make at once.

I refer particularly to those who receive the unemployability allowance. On the next page is printed the events which led up to the increase in the unemployability allowance from 20s. to 30s. a week, payable as from August 18th. On page 3, under the heading, "What You Should Do," you can read the advice which St. Dunstan's gives to all of its men or women who are receiving the unemployability allowance.

Although the Government has given them an option to stay out of the National Insurance Scheme, we nevertheless advise them most strongly to go in to it, taking advantage of the rise in the unemployability allowance itself to help pay the weekly contribution of 4s. 8d.

This advice I would give to every disabled man in receipt of the unemployability allowance even if he were not a St. Dunstaner, for the important reason that it ensures his widow a pension which is at present 26/- a week.

In the case of St. Dunstaners, there is all the more reason for joining the Insurance Scheme because following the practice of the past 22 years, we are offering to pay 2s. 4d. a week towards the cost of National Insurance for every St. Dunstaner.

This relief will be enjoyed by all but it is only those in receipt of an unemployability allowance who have to make a decision whether to go in or not, for everyone else under the age of 65 is compelled to enter the scheme.

If you have not already written to Mr. Askew in reply to the circular which you recently received, indicating your wish to go in, you should do so at once.

IAN FRASER.

10s. a Week Extra How Partial Victory for Unemployables Was Won

As readers will have seen from the full text which was sent out as a Supplement to the last REVIEW, Sir Ian Fraser, after making a powerful plea in the Commons on July 9th for all disabled ex-Servicemen whether employed or not, on the ground that the compensation they were now receiving was actually worth so much less than in earlier years, turned to the position of those who were unemployed and said: "Clearly their incomes are infinitely less and the compensation is due to them on grounds not merely of equity but of genuine hardship."

After explaining the full figures which were printed in the Supplement, Sir Ian added: "The majority of our severely disabled pensioners are living on money which is so much below the average wage rate to-day as to be ungenerous and even mean."

"If a man who is bedridden, paralysed, or blinded were to give himself the luxury of 10 cigarettes a day and one pint of beer a day, providing nothing for his wife, it would cost him £1 1s. 6d. a week out of his meagre pension. . . . If he has to find rent, there would not be very much for comfort."

On July 14th, Sir Ian Fraser moved a motion to challenge the regulations relating to overlapping benefits which were brought in by the Ministry of National Insurance. He said:

"There is a class of disabled ex-Servicemen who are unemployable. An ex-Serviceman in that class is not just unemployed, but is deemed to be unemployable, and he is in such a state that he is never likely to find work again. In addition to the war pension, to which he is entitled by Royal Warrant, he is entitled to an extra £1 a week, and that is called the unemployability allowance. This person, under these regulations, is not able to draw the sickness benefit which other people can have in other circumstances for the whole of their lives. He is not able to draw this with full advantage because, immediately he draws it, the £1 a week from the Ministry of Pensions is taken from him. That is what is meant by 'overlapping benefits.'"

"Now, there are two solutions I would put forward for these people. One solution would be to allow this overlapping and to

agree to this disabled person being allowed to join the scheme and pay contributions so that when he becomes 65 years of age he can take the full 26s. and continue to get the £1 a week. Another possibility would be to give him credits such as those given to students.

"The crofter is to be left out, but there is a temptation to him to come in because though, as might be the case, he can ill afford it, he may say, 'What shall I get?—I shall get two guineas for myself and my wife in my old age, and if I die there will be a substantial pension for my widow.' But under the present arrangement the temptation, or inducement, to the ex-Serviceman whose situation I have described is not very strong. He will pay 4s. 8d. a week to get 26s. and lose £1; or one could say that he would pay 4s. 8d. to get 6s., whereas the crofter will pay it to get two guineas.

"To try and meet this difficulty, the Government have said they will allow these ex-Servicemen to stay out altogether if they wish. What is the consequence of that? Their widows, along with the widows of gypsies and crofters, and a few other exceptionally poor people—and it follows also the widows of those disabled in industry who take the same option not to come in—will be the one group of widows who do not receive a widow's pension but have to go to the public assistance committee. We do not want to create, as the years go on, a pool of widows who are in an invidious position, and particularly we would not like that pool to be the widows of ex-Servicemen."

On July 29th, in yet a third Debate, Sir Ian Fraser opened the subject of war pensions generally; the matter was pressed again and the Minister of Pensions, after refusing to raise the basic rate, said:

"We have looked again at the special supplements which are payable in the light of the circumstances at the present time and the admitted fact that some prices have risen. The Government have decided that the unemployability supplement, which is now 20s. a week, shall be raised to 30s. a week. These rates of unemployability supplement, I should point out to the House, apply to all ranks of pensioners.

"So in future, the helpless pensioner, for whom we all feel the deepest sympathy, will receive 30s. instead of 20s. supplement."

What You Should Do

All St. Dunstaners who are at present receiving the Unemployable Supplement of 20s. per week will, with effect from August 18th next, receive an additional 10s. per week. The Ministry of Pensions will make this adjustment themselves and no application need be made by any St. Dunstaner. The Ministry hope that all these adjustments will be made by August 18th but there may in a few instances be a short delay in which case arrears will be given.

Some "unemployable" St. Dunstaners may feel that as the increased Unemployable Supplement now exceeds the Retirement Pension under the National Insurance Act, no benefit can accrue to them if they voluntarily enter the Scheme but they should remember that if they do not enter the Scheme, their wives will not be eligible for the Widow's Pension of 26s. a week on their death, nor the Death Grant of £20. They should also remember that a married man aged 65, with a wife who has herself attained 60 years of age, will be entitled by way of Retirement Pensions to 42s. a week, which is 6s. a week more than the Unemployable Allowances of 36s. a week.

We therefore strongly advise them to go into the Scheme and if they have not already completed the form of authority sent with Mr. Aske's letter, they should do so at once and return it to him.

There are some St. Dunstaners who originally received the Unemployable Supplement of 10s. a week and the 11s. or 12s. a week from their Approved Society and who, because of the increased Sickness benefit payable under the National Insurance Act, will have received a notification from the Pensions Ministry telling them of the cancellation of the Unemployable Supplement. This was at the time to their advantage, but now the Unemployable Supplement has been increased it is better for the St. Dunstaner to give up his Sickness Benefit altogether and to take once again his Unemployable Supplement. No action is necessary by the St. Dunstaner as the Ministry of Pensions have told us that they themselves will attend to the adjustment.

It appeared to us that in such cases, if the St. Dunstaner could continue to obtain

from his doctor Medical Certificates and send them as at present to the Ministry of National Insurance, he should be given automatic credit of contributions so that he would not have to find the 4s. 8d. a week which would otherwise be payable. We have taken up this matter with the Ministry of National Insurance and are happy to say that this procedure will be in order. If any St. Dunstaner is doubtful about this particular point and needs advice, he should write to Mr. Aske as it is essential that Medical Certificates should be sent as hitherto.

There are a few St. Dunstaners who cannot qualify for the Unemployable Supplement from the Ministry of Pensions, and St. Dunstan's in these cases is making them an equivalent allowance from their own funds. An increased allowance to bring them into line with the Government Scheme will be paid and the necessary adjustment will be made with the remittance sent on August 14th.

From Our Post-Bag

In forwarding a donation for St. Dunstan's from West Drayton and Yiewsley Branch of Toc H, the organiser sent a message of good cheer to all St. Dunstaners from Charles Hancock, a member of the branch. Mr. Freeborn, the organiser, added: "It is his wonderful spirit that has inspired us to carry through with this appeal."

A tribute to another St. Dunstaner, this time through a branch of the British Legion, has also reached us. It is from the Yeovil Branch Hon. Secretary, and he speaks of the good work being done for the Branch by F. J. Westaway, of Yeovil, who has on many occasions made mats for the Branch and presented them to raise funds for the Benevolent Fund.

John W. Gard, M.B.E., who is Hon. Secretary, Devon County, British Legion, has written a most useful Guide for Branch Secretaries and Members. Although he is just outside the definition of a St. Dunstaner, John Gard is one of St. Dunstan's best friends, and one of the most active workers in the Legion, to which he has given lifelong service. His Guide should be invaluable to Legion Branch officials.

Pensions Debated Again in the Commons

Opening the Debate in the House of Commons on July 29th on Service Disablement Pensions, Sir Ian Fraser said:

"It is a fact that, since 1919 progressively, and more particularly in the last ten years, wages have risen very materially—something between 60 and 200 per cent. The value of the pound has gone down. Since 1938 it has gone down from 20s. to 12s. In every sphere there has been an economic change. The payments made by the nation to all classes of hurt and maimed and old people have all been increased. Many of them have been increased by 50 per cent. and some of them have been doubled. Directors' fees, professional fees, the earnings of doctors, solicitors, journalists, even of Members of Parliament, have all been raised. How are our disabled ex-Servicemen of the two wars faring in these changed economic circumstances?"

"Throughout the history of modern pensions' law and practice, all parties have recognised that the pension is paid, not for loss of earning power, but upon a medical assessment of the handicap which the particular disability places upon the individual. That handicap is presumed to exist—and believe me, it does exist—not merely in his work, but also in his play, and in his time of rest. Day and night the man has with him that handicap, be it great or small, always wearing him down and as he gets older, his capacity to stick to a job, or to enjoy his pleasure or his leisure becomes the harder.

"Even in the great slump of 1931," Sir Ian continued, "disabled men were better off because when the axe fell on everyone else and prices reached the bottom, their pensions remained the same. But from that day onwards they have seen the cost of living rise 60, 80, even 100 points, and all those in work have had a 5s. a week rise."

The Minister had hinted in a previous debate that there was no need to do anything for these men because the majority of them had a job at the present time, but Sir Ian showed that this was no new point because ever since 1922 the overwhelming majority of all disabled men were in work.

The reason for the fairly full employment of disabled men had been the good sense and sympathy of private employers, of local

authorities and of Government employers, and the fact that the disabled man made up for his handicap by doing an extraordinarily good job and was well worth employing. Whether the pension was for the very severely disabled man and was relatively high, or whether it was a small percentage for the partially disabled, it was a make-weight for his handicap and it was no argument for not adjusting the make-weight to modern conditions to say that so many of these men were employed.

Any increase in war pensions should be *pro rata* for officers and N.C.O.s. He had seen it suggested that the few shillings a week extra paid to corporals, sergeants and warrant officers should be merged. Such a change was not only inadvisable and inequitable to those who had received it for thirty years but would only save 2 per cent.

Referring to the statement made by certain M.P.s that the miners were entitled to more money because of the risks of their industry, Sir Ian said,

"If it is a good argument to say that the risk which a man runs in his work in itself suggests the amount of compensation he should receive, then I submit to the House that the risks of war must be properly measured.

"While the emergency is on, and until the war officially comes to an end, the regular serving soldier, sailor or airman is looked after by the Ministry of Pensions if anything happens to him. If an airman is hurt in the flight to Berlin, he will be looked after by the Ministry of Pensions and will have all the advantages we have won for him in this House, of appeal tribunals, giving him the benefit of the doubt, and all the rest. The moment the war officially is over, the Regular man goes back to the care of the Army, the Navy or the Air Force, and they have to carry him on their official Vote. That ought to be altered. The Ministry of Pensions know their job well. They deal far more sympathetically and subject to rules which are better for the men, and if we are to have the Ministry of Pensions going on with this job so well, they might well be charged with the duty of looking after the small number of men who fall by the way in time of peace.

"I feel that we owe to the men who have been disabled in our service something financial at the present time because of the change in values since we compensated

them in 1919. It is a little ironical and sad that the men and women in our Services who preserved our way of life and made possible our advance towards the better world we are trying to build, should be those who, for physical reasons, cannot enjoy it. These men have saved our material civilisation and have saved many other hidden and spiritual things. We may well say of them—

'Far have they come,
Much have they braved;
Give them their hour of play;
While the hidden things their hands
have saved
Work for them day by day.'

The Minister of Pensions, Mr. Marquand, reviewed the work of his Ministry in general and stated that during the past ten years, many improvements had been made in pensions, allowances, eligibility and services.

Referring to Sir Ian Fraser's observations about unemployability, he said it must be easier for a man to get a job now than it was before the war. Mr. Marquand continued:

"In the light of the very large numbers who are in employment, in the light of the very substantial numbers receiving unemployment supplement, special hardship allowances, constant attendance allowances, treatment allowances, plus allowances for their wives and children, let us consider the question of the basic pension. Too many people imagine that the figure of 45s. which is quoted is the sole income for a war disabled pensioner. The misconception probably arises from this phrase '100 per cent. disabled.' There are, as I said, 52,250 of these, but they are not all unemployed. The phrase '100 per cent.' as it were, is almost a term of art. It does not mean what the uninstructed member of the public may imagine it means—a person confined to an invalid chair, unable to do work of any kind. It means simply that he is disabled to an extent sufficient to enable him to qualify for maximum pension.

"The figure of 45s. which has been referred to is, of course, the figure for a private soldier. The Hon. Member for Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser) has already given interesting figures on that point which I have no desire to controvert. This Government raised the rate to 45s. in February, 1946, and it is now the same rate as that provided for civilians under the national

injuries scheme. The Government wants to assimilate as closely as it can the National Injuries scheme with the War Pensions Disablement provisions. As the House knows, we are trying in various ways to bring these together by special limb appliances, the assessment of disability, and the like.

"I do not deny for one moment—in fact I assert as strongly as the Hon. Member for Lonsdale—that this payment of the basic pension is compensation for disablement; for hardship and misfortune and the other eventualities following disablement. There are other allowances. I agree that we need not talk much about the cost of living or hardship when we are dealing with basic pension rates. That pension is a compensation for the injury done. The need of the unfortunate pensioner—the man suffering hardship—is met by our supplementary allowances. But the Government feel they cannot make additional payments to those who are fully employed.

"The Government cannot agree to change the basic rate because there are supplementary schemes existing outside industry. However, we have looked again at the special supplements which are payable in the light of the circumstances at the present time and the admitted fact that some prices have risen. The Government have decided that the unemployability supplement, which is now 20s. a week, shall be raised to 30s. a week. These rates of unemployability, I should point out to the House, apply to all ranks of pensioners.

"We have decided to improve the position of the other-rank pensioner receiving treatment allowances who is not eligible for sickness benefit under the National Insurance Scheme, by giving him an additional allowance of 20s. a week. These allowances can be paid only to the pensioner in hospital who has dependents. This also applies to the other-rank pensioner, but I should be prepared to look into any special cases of hardship of superior ranks if they are raised. These improvements will be introduced with effect from 18th August."

Brigadier Peto (Barnstaple) warmly supported the points put forward by Sir Ian Fraser, and said that he and his friends on that side of the House were more concerned with whether or not a fair deal is being received by the 700,000 who are not 100 per cent. disability pensioners. The fact

which the Minister had mentioned that out of three-quarters of a million ex-Service pensioners, 2,430 were in receipt of the hardship allowance, was nothing to be proud of. He believed that the degree of injury—the loss of a leg, the loss of a husband—was the same, whether suffered in industry, in a road accident or on Service. There were two instances where the relationship between the industrial and Service disability pension was not identical. One was that the Service disability pension was in no way contributory. The other was that there was no opportunity for any bargaining on the part of the Service or ex-Service man.

Mr. Chetwynd (Stockton-on-Tees) thought it was not just the financial compensation which made all the difference between a disabled person enjoying or not enjoying life; there were many other considerations. He asked for three small points to be considered; the raising of the allowance for a private's wife from 10s. to 16s., thus bringing it into line with all other schemes; the assessment of unemployment benefit when a disabled man is unemployed; and the disparity existing between the pensions of privates and senior officers.

Captain Marsden (Chertsey) said the increase of 8½ per cent. of the pension of the wounded ex-Servicemen compared with the increase in salaries of M.P.s (150 per cent.) and agricultural labourers (220 per cent.) was not fair or reasonable. He asked the Minister to read the speech of the hon. Member for Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser). If that did not stir his heart, nothing would.

Mr. Parkin (Stroud) paid a generous tribute to the work of Mr. Webb, the pensions and employment officer of the British Legion. He added: "Nothing in terms of money can compensate for what these men have suffered and I am not only speaking of the physically disabled, because no man comes out of a war unscathed. Every man has to face his own problems. How much more is that the case for the disabled man? He has many more of these 'dark hours unseen' when he sometimes wonders if it had not been better never to have come back at all."

Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Stamford and Rutland) supported Sir Ian Fraser and suggested that as an alternative or second best to Sir Ian's proposal for an increase in the basic rate, the basic rate of pension for all other ranks should be raised to that of a

W.O.1, which would mean a rise from 45s. to 61s. 8d. a week. His opinion was that a disability pension should be based solely on the degree of disability and that the question of rank should not come into it.

He thought there should be a 100 per cent. plus assessment for disability. It was illogical and almost indefensible that when the Minister laid down with meticulous care scales for those with amputations, once one gets above 100 per cent., the Minister relied on various supplementary allowances from outside to make up the difference. People below 100 per cent. could draw the supplementary allowances; those who were over 100 per cent. should get some consideration. He also felt that if it was possible to scale the constant attendance allowance from five to twenty, there ought to be a step between twenty and forty.

Dr. Haden Guest spoke of the great increase in the numbers of disabled men who were now entitled to pension as a result of the extension of forms of assistance given, but he added: "Disabilities of any kind, contracted while in the Services, should entitle the Serviceman to proper compensation without any question as to attributability or aggravation."

Mr. Grimston (Westbury) said that the Minister could hardly object that members on both sides of the House had expressed disappointment with his speech for he turned down almost every suggestion which the Member for Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser) made very movingly and very sincerely. Mr. Grimston compared some of the rises which had taken place in things which the average pensioner possibly wanted more than other people because of his disability—bus and tube fares, a glass of beer, and tobacco. Referring to the mining industry he said a scheme had just been approved under which five-sixths of the extra of compensation was to be borne by the public. It was obvious, from the fact that the scheme was approved, that the Government and Parliament were satisfied that the compensation was not sufficient. He could not imagine that on either side of the House, there was a wish to deny to the ex-Serviceman what was deemed to be expedient for another class of the community. To talk of degrees of risk was completely irrelevant.

Mr. Marquand said they thought it was reasonable to keep the rate for the disabled

Free Motor Cars for Some Disabled

On June 7th, during the Committee Stage of the Finance Bill, Sir Ian Fraser moved a new clause to exempt from the purchase tax motor cars for 100 per cent. pensioners. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury rejected this on general grounds, but stated that the Minister of Pensions, as a result of pleas that had been made in the House by Mr. W. S. Shepherd, Sir Ian Fraser and other Members, intended to bring in an improved scheme for the supply of free motor vehicles for certain categories of disabled men and women.

In withdrawing his new clause, Sir Ian Fraser said that he did so with reluctance because he felt that any new scheme the Government brought in would benefit very few whereas the removal of purchase tax would benefit many.

On July 27th, Sir Ian Fraser asked the Minister of Pensions if he had any statement to make. The Minister replied:

"I am glad to say that a scheme has been worked out in agreement with my Central Advisory Committee under which a limited number of small cars, not exceeding 1,500, will be made available over the next two years for supplying, free of charge, to certain classes of very seriously disabled war pensioners who may elect to receive a car in place of the motor propelled tricycle to which they are entitled under existing regulations. These classes consist of double leg amputees, of which at least one amputation is above the knee, paraplegics, and pensioners suffering from other disabilities resulting in the total, or almost total loss of use of both legs. When the needs of these classes have been satisfied, any balance of cars available within the number stated will be distributed on as fair a basis as possible to other very seriously disabled war pensioners at present supplied with motor propelled tricycles to enable them to obtain or retain employment, and also to blind war pensioners who require a car for the same purpose.

"The cars will remain the property of my Ministry and will be supplied under certain conditions and with proper safeguards in respect of the Department's liability as owners. The pensioner will be responsible for driving licence, garaging, repairs, and maintenance and running costs, but will receive an annual grant from my

war pensioners at the same level and to try gradually to assimilate the practice of the Ministry of Pensions, the Ministry of National Insurance and the Ministry of Health for the benefit of all classes in the community who are suffering from these disablements, to which Sir Ian Fraser replied:

"If the Government make so much of the point that it wants the soldiers', sailors' and airmen's scheme put on the same lines as the industrial scheme, how can the Minister reconcile that with not taking into account such an important and new situation as the supplementary schemes to the industrial scheme?"

Mr. Marquand: "Because those who work in the industries and contribute to a supplementary scheme are entitled to have all the benefits for which they contribute and because the vast majority of war pensioners are fortunately and happily in work and earning wages at the same rate as the rest of the community. Any disabled man has the right to benefit from a supplementary scheme as applied to his industry, at the same time as the more fortunate classes.

"The Noble Lord, the Member for Rutland and Stamford, raised points about the possibility of having a higher disability assessment than what we now call 100 per cent., and also about the constant attendance allowance. We have already discussed this to some extent with the association to which he belongs, and we will further consider what it has said, and what he has said to-night, and undertake that an answer will be sent to the association on this point before very long.

"Having said we want the social services assimilated to make wide provision for all kinds of disability and misfortune, I will say that I will consult with the Minister of National Insurance not only on the three points my Hon. friend the Member for Stockton-on-Tees (Mr. Chetwynd) raised, but also on the general question of trying to eliminate any anomalies that may exist between various schemes.

"These anomalies do exist, as my Hon. friend said, in the differing rates for compensation for the loss of the same kind of limb that are paid to the various ranks in the Armed Forces. However, retrospective alteration involving reduction of incomes would not be a fair proposition. I undertake to study the matters raised."

Department towards the cost of these items. My Ministry will be responsible for payment of the road tax and comprehensive insurance."

Sir I. Fraser: "Whilst thanking the Minister for his statement, may I ask him first, when will he issue full details of this scheme; secondly, whether the 1,500 cars are for one year or two years; and thirdly, how many ex-Service men will get motor cars in addition to those who now have tricycles?"

Mr. Marquand: "In reply to the last of those questions, which I remember most easily, it is difficult to say, because we do not know how many of those who have a tricycle at present will opt for a motor car. There may be many who prefer to have a tricycle because it gives greater mobility in certain cases. The figure of 1,500 relates to a period of two years, mainly because of difficulties of supply at a time when it is necessary to export as many cars as we possibly can. I hope the details of the scheme will receive some publicity tomorrow so that pensioners will be aware of them, but we shall be sending out letters to all the eligible classes. However, I must reiterate what I have already said, that the figure of 1,500 is spread over a considerable period and it will take time to meet all the requests which we shall undoubtedly receive."

In a passage during the recent war pensions debate, Mr. Marquand, referring to the motor car scheme, said:

"The announcement which I had the pleasure of making to the House last week about the supply of motor cars, which will in itself, when it is fully in operation, cost something in the region of £500,000 or £1 million, indicated a new provision, which is one of many that are being made, for the purpose of trying to help the pensioner to live, so far as his disabilities will allow him, a normal life, to meet the normal community, to drive in the sunshine when we have it, to visit his friends and relatives, accompanied sometimes in his car by relatives, so that he does not go about in solitude. Everything that I can do to aid this constructive service I will do."

For Sale

CARAVAN, four berth, modern, new. £450 or nearest offer. Electric light, gas cooker, plenty of cupboards, wardrobe. Suitable for four people.—W. Collyer, 96 Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey, S.E.

Birth

LEE.—On July 12th, to the wife of J. A. Lee of Leeds, a son—Christopher John.

Death

NEWMAN.—We extend our deepest sympathy to R. Newman, of Hastings, who lost his mother on December 16th last.

Marriage

SPENCE—RAWSON.—On July 17th, E. Stewart C. Spence to Miss Joyce Rawson.

Silver Weddings

Congratulations to the following upon their anniversaries:—

Mr. and Mrs. J. Whittingslow, Kidderminster, December 16th, 1947; Mr. and Mrs. W. Carthy, Rainworth, Manchester, August 1st; Mr. and Mrs. G. Wilkins, Reading, August 11th.

Right There

I cannot see, so I must ask my way around the town

Or if the Station is uphill, or if the way is down. My heart is filled with mirthless glee, when carelessly they say

"Oh, that's all right, you turn 'Right there,' and then you go 'That way.'

"It's 'Straight ahead' before your eyes," and they walk on, and then

I stumble on not knowing why, or what, or where, or when.

So many times they say to me "Why, that's it over there,"

With not a thing to show me, exactly, where is "There."

The elevator is "Right There," the stairs are "Right There," too—

I turn first right and then to left, I don't know what to do.

"Right There's your bread, and here's your soup and over there your tea,"

I find the water when I reach—it's spilled all over me!

"Right There" the door I must walk through, my chair is placed "Right There,"

"Right There" the desk I should meet you, but you alone know where.

Just thoughtlessness I know, of course, but I'd like folks to explain

Just where "Right There" is apt to be to us who seek in vain.

D. C. JAMES.

(Sent to us by A. R. Reynolds, of Shrewsbury.)