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EDITORIAL.

MEDICAL AND WELFARE WORK IN NORTHERN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR.

GRENFELL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND.

PATRONS: THE KING AND QUEEN.

Usually about this time of year we have news of those glistening lands of romance associated with the name of Wilfred Grenfell—Northern Newfoundland and Labrador, and we are not surprised to learn that "War comes to Labrador," and that all overhead expenses have been cut to a minimum, and unless income can be increased the Mission is faced with the possibility of having to curtail, or even eliminate, some of its activities. This is not to be contemplated for a moment by those of us who can recall that it is over 50 years since Wilfred Grenfell first sailed from England to become "The Labrador Doctor," the first physician to live on the sub-Arctic coasts of Labrador, where British fishermen faced every problem of privation.

With the help of his colleagues, he gave to these isolated people a new civilisation and chance to help themselves, a splendid example of self-sacrifice to the Empire. Now the work is carried on in the spirit of the Founder by Dr. Charles S. Curtis, from St. Anthony, the headquarters of the Mission on the coast. Dr. Curtis states, in a leaflet: "All's well here but busy, hospital full and too much to do with too few to do it. . . . The problems of the Mission are tremendous. However, it will all work out."

The Mission carries on along a thousand-mile coast line, icebound for many months in the year. It is well organised and runs five hospitals, four nursing stations, one children's home, one day school, two boarding schools, one hospital ship, one supply vessel, and other smaller boats, and industrial and agricultural centres at all stations. The wonderfully intelligent dog teams are a unique feature of the Mission.

War Comes to Labrador.

A doctor recently in charge of a Grenfell hospital station on the Labrador, writes, in a leaflet issued by the Mission:

"We have some badly burned men here from a torpedoed vessel! There are many more out there floating around in boats. I must get right back." With these words the Commander of a nearby construction camp brought ashore from his motor boat men in whose blackened faces the eyes shone white, and on whom only charred pieces of clothing remained.

"It was an abrupt change from the cycle of life at the Grenfell station. Ours was the only hospital on that lonely shore. Our wards were crowded, and we had made frequent trips to tiny coves to patients too ill to come through those icy seas. We had been canning the food supply against Labrador's winter, when the harbours are ice blocked for many months. Our boarding-school children were on vacation, helping their families with the fishery, but we had been busy holding Clothing Store days for women from 'down the Coast,' giving clothing in return for the making of a hooked rug or some other work, to keep up their self-respect. We were used to caring for those who needed our help, but with the arrival of these men, we faced a new emergency—the saving of lives of the victims of a tragedy of this war.

"We did not stop that night to hear their story. There was too much else to do to give them rest and some degree of comfort. The first ashore had been standing on a lower deck just above where the torpedo had hit. They had no memory of leaving the ship. Next day brought us more survivors, suffering from broken ribs, sprained joints, steam scalds. The captain could not wait for medical treatment, though he had severe burns received in saving the lives of several of his crew. He must go on for food for his men. So many people landed in one small, isolated settlement had almost stripped the place of provisions. And he must go back for another ship.

"For these men the discovery of a modern hospital in this remote region was a miraculous surprise. I speak for the whole staff in saying that nothing could have given us greater satisfaction than the privilege of serving them. Their courage inspires confidence for the future of the United Nations.

"To-day, Labrador and Northern Newfoundland are vital outposts of British and American defence. The Grenfell Hospitals assume new significance on a strategic coastline. The Grenfell Association must stand prepared for any emergency.

"One of many difficulties caused by the war is the greatly increased cost of food, coal, hospital equipment and supplies of every kind which must be transported to the coast. In Newfoundland, living is very high and the Mission must pay higher wages to their local employees to enable them to live, as pre-war wages are now utterly inadequate.

"Will you help us to meet the need? Your contribution now will enable Sir Wilfred's work not only to serve the people of those Northern coasts, but to save the lives of the men fighting for the United Nations."

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