

## 2. Meknes Survivors.

Following on the Prime Minister's desire that the survivors of the *Meknes* should be treated as well as possible and that the opportunity should be taken of informing Frenchmen of the treatment they may expect at the hands of the Germans, the following action was taken:—

- (a) Officers and men were sent to the naval training establishments at Fareham, Trevol and Skegness, where they were given rest and comfort and kitted up.
- (b) Admiral Muselier was given every facility to address the Officers and Men and he was accompanied by a British Naval Liaison Officer at each place, who also spoke to the Officers and Men.
- (c) The Ministry of Information was asked to produce Posters giving the facts attending the sinking of the *Meknes* and also daily News Sheets in French. They have also arranged for suitable people to visit the Establishments to undertake welfare work and chat with the men.

3. Admiral Muselier's visit has, so far, been unproductive. He was coolly received by the French Officers. His speech to the men did not appear to have much effect one way or the other. *The men said, as they have always said, that their one desire was to return to France and see their families.*

The remarks of the British Naval Officer who visited Skegness, where the greater number of the survivors were established, were to the following effect:—

- (a) French Officers and Men say that they have been very well treated and that they are most grateful, and that their relations with the British Officers and Men in charge of their welfare are extremely friendly. They are obviously impressed by the smartness and efficiency of the Camp and by the Ceremonies of Divisions, prayers, hoisting colours, &c., which they attend.
- (b) They consider that they were much less well treated at Liverpool, except in the matter of leave. A small minority would prefer to be at Liverpool to see girl friends and the other Sailors.
- (c) The men seem to have a poor opinion of their Officers. They say that the Officers were first away in the boats.
- (d) Much gratitude was expressed towards the ships who picked up the survivors of the *Meknes*.

The British Naval Officer again emphasises the preoccupation of the men about their families. They seem to have little idea of the present situation of France, and imagine that they will be able to find and succour their families if only they can get there. Many would gladly stay and work in England if safety of family was assured. It seems to be expected that we shall win the war and that France will rise again, but, in the meantime, their duty is to their wives and children.

There seems to be no ill-feeling towards the men who have joined the British Navy. They are believed to be mostly bachelors.

Our pamphlet on conditions of service has been carefully studied, and a small minority is thinking of joining us.

So far no Officers or Men of the *Meknes* survivors have volunteered to join the Royal Navy or General de Gaulle.

## 4. Aintree Camps.

The work of improving conditions there by the Admiralty is being continued. Posters and News Sheets from the Ministry of Information have been distributed. Private organisations are busy with welfare matters.

### (ii) Army.

#### *Aldershot.*

5.—(a) *Strength*.—Delville Barracks: 41 Officers, 1124 Other Ranks.

Morval Barracks: 19 Officers, 487 Other Ranks.

Morval Barracks, Foreign Legion: 30 officers, 898 Other Ranks.

(b) *Accommodation*.—No change.

(c) *Equipment*.—Extensive equipment of French troops at Aldershot is now being carried out. Details are not yet available, but will appear in next week's report.