

THE DANISH SEWING CIRCLE

March 1946

253 Riddell Road,
St. Heliers,
AUCKLAND.

Dear *Mr. Laughilde*

I know you will rejoice with the Sewing Circle to learn that our cases of clothing have arrived in, and with the gracious assistance of the Crown Princess, President of the Committee for distribution of clothing from abroad, subsequently been distributed throughout Denmark.

We have received many stirring letters from Leaders of Distribution Organisations, recipients themselves and from some of the Danish "Lottes". A "Lotte" is a woman who during the five dark years of occupation, has been officially attached to the Air-defence and secretly attached to the Resistance Movement.

One large case each was sent to the cities of Copenhagen, Odense and Aarhus and from these centres parcels were sent to various parts of Denmark, including that far flung island of Bornholm. The school teacher from the last mentioned place wrote a most interesting letter of the experiences of that little island during the Russian Bombardment. How thousands away from the capital which apart from a few private houses was razed to the ground. He also reports that on arriving at school one morning he noticed a strong smell of clean naphthalene permeating the classroom. The cause of this was revealed when a small boy, in new clothes, proudly walked up to the teacher holding in his hand a card which read, "From the Danish Sewing Circle and their N.Z. friends." Three children in that School had been clothed. The teacher immediately converted his usual lesson to a religious one revealing to the children the practical love of their unknown friends afar off.

A letter from the Town Hall in Aarhus was typical of many, where mention was made of the rejoicing in homes, when, with grateful hearts, even tears of gratitude, they received garments, the quality of which had not been seen for over five years. Even the ladies who distributed the clothing, ran their fingers through the woollies to get the thrill of the luxurious warmth.

Boys shirts have been made out of Roller blinds, which in turn were replaced by brown paper. One lady purchased a tent which was converted into a shirt and a table cloth. A daughter stepped into a new skating outfit made from a heavy table cover and trimmed with good pieces cut from her brother's worn out pants.

Stockings made of hemp made the children cry as they were scratchy and lacked warmth. Many school children had no underclothes at all, and some had never even worn a pair of pyjamas.

The tiny island of Stryno, with only 500 inhabitants received enough clothing for 29 children and their mothers. I quote from a letter, typical of the many received: "We women of Denmark feel, that although the forces of hatred have been unleashed around us, it gladdens us doubly that, on the other side of the world, country women, working in love, have not forgotten Denmark and the Danes. Now we are free again, we are cleansing the wounds we have received and strive once more to restore normal conditions."

Knowing also that firing is almost unprocurable in Denmark, you will realise that the garments were doubly appreciated, arriving as they did amongst the FIRST to reach Denmark and in good time for their severe winter.

When we commenced the Sewing Circle some thought our attempt futile, but you will agree that every effort was worth while. Apart from the practical help, the Danish women felt spiritually uplifted in the knowledge that their welfare was in the hearts of those living in a land of peace and plenty,

Please accept this letter as a personal expression of thanks from the Danish women in Denmark to you, and with it the grateful appreciation of the Sewing Circle and myself.

Sincerely yours,

Ingeborg Laughilde
Convener.

Hon. Secretary
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G.L.