

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE



TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"ADMINAUST, LONDON."
CABLE ADDRESS:
"STRALIS, LONDON."
TELEPHONE:
VICTORIA 8260 (8 LINES)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F.,

130, HORSEFERRY ROAD,

LONDON, S.W.

12th July 1917

Dear General

Re the enclosed and the anonymous letter to you. - I am astounded -

When I took over here, this was a very free and easy place from a disciplinary point of view and to put it on a proper footing it was necessary to tighten up. Things very considerably - but to the best of my belief this was done, quietly, and tactfully, and I do not think there is any general feeling of discontent - there probably is some discontent entirely due to our policy of combing out the fit men and replacing them by girls, but this cannot be helped.

To take the anonymous letter to you first - generally speaking all such letters have some substratum of truth - this one has very little so far as any

MARSHALL COLLECTION
3
DRL
2352

Specific charges are made -

The charge that ^{some} men are required to shave twice a day is of course absurd. - (Men only parade once a day. i.e. at 8.45 each morning) - but it has a slight foundation. - One morning a man came to see me to complain that he had been "checked" on parade because he was unshaven. - he said he could not shave every day as his skin was too tender. - I told him that if he would get a statement to that effect from the Medical Officer he would be exempt. - but he failed to do so.

A somewhat similar foundation exists for the statement that letters drafted by some of the clerks are altered by Officers who are incompetent educationally. - a few weeks ago a man complained to me of this. - the Officer was one we were using in the Furlis' Section during the time he was an out-patient of a Hospital in London. - I saw the letters referred to, and they certainly had been clumsily altered, - but as the Officer was only employed here for two or three weeks I did not take any action. -

I am sure neither of the two men referred to above wrote the anonymous letter to you - but quite likely they spoke of their experiences to other

who in turn passed it on, in an exaggerated way to others until the snow hills became mountains - and at last someone wrote to you.

With regard to the leave - the instructions issued are to the effect that Officers Command of Sections may grant leave each week to 4% of their strength from 6 pm on Thursday until

8.45 am on the following W'day - a clear 5 days - and as this is given to 4% of the strength each week - men are enabled to get 5 days twice in each year. - I am sure you will agree that this is liberal in war time.

I do not think the men have any just reason for complaint - Buggy is perhaps what Australian soldiers call a little "regimental" - but I have spoken to him and I am sure this will be altered.

With regard to Mrs Graham Murray's letter - I have met this lady on several occasions and am astonished at her statements.

The matter of the Chaplain. I cannot trace the slightest foundation for - none of the Chaplains live in flats. I have asked the lady supervisors

if they have heard any rumours of an officer having taken any of the girls out at night, or of behaving in an indiscreet manner. - they say positively that no such thing has occurred. -

Will you permit me to call and see Mrs Graham Murray, and say you have asked me to get particulars of some complaints she worked to get remedied. - I will do so very carefully. - if you concur, will you please have a wire sent telling me you have no objection. - Her letter is worrying me very much, and I shall anxiously await your reply. - I feel sure that if I can only see her I shall be able to get some solution satisfactory to us so far as the Chaplain episode is concerned.

With regard to changing Buggy I hope you will not do this - at all events ^{not} just now. - the writers of the anonymous letter will know they have scored. - I am perfectly satisfied with him and after I have seen Mrs Graham Murray I hope to be able to tell you that what she has written is based on what she has heard from one or two interested men only - and is not in any way expressive of the general opinion, but if you do determine to replace him, then I shall be glad if you would give me two or three days to think over whom I should like to have to succeed him, & in consequence

T. GRIFFITH. T. Griffith



The A.I.F. Educational Scheme.

This Pamphlet, containing—

- (a) **Opening Remarks** by General Sir W. R. BIRDWOOD, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., **A.D.C.**, G.O.C., A.I.F., at a meeting of senior officers of the A.I.F., assembled on 10th June, 1918, to discuss an EDUCATION SCHEME ;
- (b) **Memorandum** by Chaplain the Right Rev. Bishop G. M. LONG, D.D., on EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION for the A.I.F.,

is issued for the information of all concerned.

The executive orders and instructions for putting the scheme into operation and developing it on the lines stated herein will be issued shortly, and from time to time as required.

T. H. DODDS,
Brigadier-General,
D.A.G., A.I.F.

HEADQUARTERS, A.I.F.

11th June, 1918.

Opening Remarks

By General Sir W. R. BIRDWOOD,
K.C.B., K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., **A.D.C.**,
G.O.C., A.I.F.,

AT A

MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN
IMPERIAL FORCE ASSEMBLED, ON JUNE 10TH, 1918,
TO DISCUSS AN EDUCATION SCHEME.

I have asked you to meet me here this morning in order that I may explain to you and secure your co-operation in the organization of an Educational Scheme for the Australian Imperial Force.

Bishop Long will give you the detailed plans of the scheme and its aims. I will not keep you by going into them. Before, however, we touch upon the actual educational proposals there is a point on which I hope you all here will consider very deliberately and impress on all your officers to do likewise, viz., the very urgent necessity in any case of doing all we can to look after our men in every possible way once a period of demobilisation begins. I regard it as one of the most difficult periods we shall have to go through: constant drills or anything approaching them will, of course, be quite out of the question, but if we are going to maintain our high reputation to the end, as I know all are determined we shall do, we must keep our men occupied, contented and cheerful, and it will be up to everyone of us to exert his utmost to this end. We have to remember that it must take many months before our large force can be got back to Australia—long, weary months, with, at the best, probably not too much to be done during them, except, perhaps, in the case of men for whom we are able to provide regular congenial occupation, such as farming, building, engineering, clerical, etc..

either in France or in England. The great majority of men we will undoubtedly have to look after by our own personal exertion in the way of work, games, and entertainments, and this is certainly one of the really important points of view from which I am so anxious we should regard this Educational Scheme. Just one word before I leave this particular point—please do not run away with the idea or let any of our men do so, that the fact that we are thinking of demobilisation means that we see the end of the war immediately before us—I much wish we did, but we must realise that such is not the case at present, and it would be disastrous if by any chance our men were allowed to jump to the conclusion that the war was over. It would, as we know, cause a very great deal of disappointment, with probably deplorable results, if any such false hopes were held out. This Education Scheme did not originate with us. I believe the Canadians first realised that, in a prolonged war such as this, steps were necessary for the regeneration of the men and in the nation's interests.

The British Armies in France have also taken up the idea, and both in those Armies and in the Canadian Force, as well as, I believe, in the New Zealand Force, a tentative scheme is already in operation.

It would, of course, be a great thing if we could all co-operate in the one scheme. The conditions in the various parts of the Empire are so diverse, however, that I doubt if one scheme sufficiently comprehensive could be made practicable.

My whole interest in the idea has been stimulated by Mr. Bean, who, as usual, has been foremost in almost everything aiming at the betterment of the men. After discussing the matter with Mr. Bean I came to the conclusion that before us lay a great opportunity, and that it was incumbent upon us to create a big, strong, and consistent educational organization within the A.I.F.

Let me explain to you what I mean by saying a great opportunity lay before us. We have in the A.I.F. the

flower of Australian manhood. These young men were in various walks of life before the war, the framework upon which the Australian nation was being builded. By the war the work of these young men has been disturbed, and, while in the military sphere they have made history and tradition beyond compare for Australia, a great part of their energies has of necessity lain idle and become almost atrophied.

In the first place, therefore, a chance was presented to us of repairing this waste. Any steps taken would, of course, be outside the military curriculum, but this war has frequently caused us to leave the beaten path, and it seems to me that there can be made both time and facility for doing the work I have indicated without impairing military efficiency.

Again, let me ask you, has there ever before been presented to a nation the opportunity of training the bulk of its young manhood, and inculcating the right ideas of good citizenship and patriotism, such as there is now before us? A chance is undoubtedly presented of directing the minds and energies of the men into channels which flow into the sea of national greatness.

If you agree with me that there is a great opportunity before us, and that we should seize it, you will agree also that we must do a big, whole-hearted thing. It is necessary that we should have the co-operation and the vigorous support of everyone in the Australian Imperial Force. It is to ask you to grant me this co-operation and support that I am taking this opportunity of meeting you. I look to you to stimulate great enthusiasm in the scheme, and to make its supervision your own special care.

What the scheme aims at is briefly—

1. To give to those men who have already set out in a profession, trade or occupation, the opportunity of resuming their studies and apprenticeships.
2. To give to those men who have no definite profession,

trade or occupation the chance of selecting one, and undergoing a preliminary training.

3. To give to all men of the Force what may be called an inspirational training by means of lectures, classes and courses, and such other steps as will enable them to consider and discuss topics of the day, and all that goes to make up good citizenship.

I think we have also three periods for which to legislate :—

1. The period while the war continues.
2. The period while peace negotiations are in progress and the Armies have still to be maintained in the field.
3. The period during demobilisation, which also includes the homeward journey.

During the period of the continuance of the war, our Educational Scheme will of necessity be somewhat hampered. I did not want this difficulty to delay action. It seems to me that we must begin at once, proceeding tentatively at first, but with a fixed object in view.

It was necessary for me to consider how best the organization could be brought into being. I therefore assembled a small Committee to discuss the various factors, and upon the result of its deliberations I have decided that the Committee shall lay down the broad outline of the scheme, and that I shall have to appoint a Director of Education, who will take the matter entirely in his own hands, and put the organization in motion.

The Right Rev. Bishop Long arrived at an opportune moment, and, knowing his great talents, I approached him, and asked him to undertake the onerous task which lies before a Director of Education. Bishop Long has kindly consented to do this, and he will speak to you presently and give you an outline of the manner in which he proposes to proceed.

I am meanwhile explaining to the Australian Govern-

ment what is in hand, and asking them to give to the scheme their whole-hearted co-operation. I have pointed out to the Minister that I think the work is part of the Repatriation Scheme which has been so admirably begun in Australia. I have suggested that the Educational Organization here should be made part of the great Australian Repatriation Scheme, and that the two branches should work hand in hand. I hope, in due course, that we shall get the Australian Government's concurrence in this.

Bishop Long's organisation will for the time being be a part of the A.I.F. The Bishop will explain to you, as I have stated, what he has in view. My intention is that the Educational Organization should be flexible, and not bound to military organization. By this I mean to say that, while there will be no definite form of battalion and brigade classes, the educational classes will be held in a manner suitable to the attendance of the men from all battalions and brigades.

There is one other point to which I must refer before closing. In your explanation to subordinate officers and men—and I ask that this be made very clear—will you please make it perfectly plain that this Educational organization is not concerned in politics, sectarianism, or propaganda, but is purely designed for the benefit of the men, and in the interests of the Australian Nation; it will not be used for any other purpose.

Please do not think I do not fully realise the very great difficulties which lie before us in carrying out this scheme; but, irrespective of the fact that I know we are always ready to tackle any difficulties, when by so doing we are promoting the welfare of our men, I am equally confident that if we do not establish such an educational system, the difficulties with which we shall be faced in looking after our men during the demobilisation period will be infinitely greater than those presented by the formulation and fulfilment of a scheme of the nature of that which we now have under consideration.

Memorandum

BY

Chaplain the Right Rev. Bishop G. M. LONG, D.D.,

ON

Educational Organization for the A.I.F.

The organization is designed to render service to the Army, to Australia, to the men of the A.I.F.

It is essential during a protracted war to have agencies for keeping the men mentally alert and eager so as to prevent war weariness and consequent decline of moral.

Interesting courses of study concurrent with the routine of Military duties are very helpful indirectly in making good soldiers and maintaining discipline, breaches of which not infrequently have their origin in sheer boredom. Sufficiently strong reasons exist for the establishment of such an organization during the continuance of actual warfare, but the most powerful reasons are to be found in contemplating the period when hostilities cease.

It is wise to prepare for a condition of affairs when agreement has been made to suspend warfare upon International conditions, which of necessity would be general in their statement. International Conferences may then be called to discuss and to find the greatest settlement in history of national boundaries and aspirations, disposition of colonial possessions, commercial treaties and many other vast and intricate subjects.

During the greater part of such a possible Conference it may be impossible to withdraw men or guns from the Field. Armies may have to be maintained for a very considerable period in the Field with little or no military functions to perform.

This period would be anterior to the period of demobil-

ization which again would take length of time. These combined periods would be times of extreme difficulty in maintaining a high standard of conduct unless two precautions had previously been taken, *viz.*,

(1) To create in the minds of the soldiers a true expectancy of what may be necessary, so that they may not feel suddenly and unreasonably balked in their natural desire for a quick home return.

(2) To have planned and ready for immediate execution an organization for turning their natural activities into useful channels, strongly appealing to their self-interest and their patriotism.

If an organization is provided which has been justifying itself in actual work in the limited opportunities afforded by actual warfare, which by careful tests has arrived at a reliable statistical estimate of the various kinds of training desired and has arranged a skeleton formation by which this training could be provided with despatch, this dangerous period of transition may not only be passed through without disaster, but may be turned to uses of supreme value to the State and to the men.

The period of transport back to Australia is specifically included in this dangerous period of transition and is one that would be put to the good uses designed.

The flower of young Australian manhood is to be found in our forces here, and a great opportunity is presented of inspiring them with high ideals of citizenship, and of arousing within them an intelligent interest in the great problems confronting society during the period of reconstruction following the war.

Courses of lectures and studies would be conducted by the ablest minds in the United Kingdom and in the A.I.F. These would be followed up by Study Circles on the lines of the Workers' Educational Association, conducted by specially expert members of the A.I.F. The men serving here are worthy of every assistance that can be rendered

them for their re-entry into civil life. It is contemplated that activities would develop along the following lines:—

(1) Assisting men to prepare for interrupted courses of vocational training of all descriptions.

(2) Gradually to make possible the direct continuance of these courses within the A.I.F.

(3) Encouraging the unskilled to take up the study of some branch of skilled labour suited to Australian conditions, so as to remove them from the hazards of unemployment which most readily beset the casual labourer in a period of unsettlement. Thus it is hoped to assist in avoiding the scandal and consequent political outcry of having men, who have served faithfully as soldiers, sinking into indigence. The establishment of this organization with the A.I.F. will enable it to be shown in the future that careful forethought was taken and every opportunity provided to prepare men for the life after the war.

(4) Guiding the selection and providing the training for the many, who, owing to the experience of the war, are averse to returning to their former occupations and desire a different mode of life, *e.g.*, many who were formerly clerks express a strong desire for country pursuits.

(5) Rendering similar assistance to those who by early enlistment came away to the war before they had entered upon any civil occupation, or the training for one, and who know only one trade—that of war.

To meet the needs thus indicated three chief divisions of studies would arise. By far the greatest and most urgent of these would be included under the wide term of **Technology**, which again would have three chief divisions:

- (a) All studies relating to the land—agricultural, pastoral, fruit growing, irrigation, care of stock, etc., etc.
- (b) Wood and iron trades of all descriptions.
- (c) Commercial pursuits.

Another of the chief divisions would come under the general heading of professional, and the third chief heading would be those of the studies that go to make good and intelligent citizenship, the scope of which has been previously indicated.

In addition to these activities it is intended that the organization should act as a kind of bureau or agency for guiding, informing and commending men to educational opportunities beyond those which it is able to provide within the A.I.F. Many men are thinking of special courses of study before their return and during their retention here. The Universities of the United Kingdom are showing a very receptive attitude to these desires. Various forms of scholarships and bursaries are being suggested. It is also quite possible that an extensive and capable course of correspondence classes may be established. Again, as will be shown later, the British Army Council is launching a great scheme for the Armies of the United Kingdom, special courses of Study in which would be open to selected and commended members of our forces. The Educational Establishment of the A.I.F. would be able to assist very largely in making known, and available to our men, all such opportunities.

It will be apparent that the whole of this work leads directly on to the great schemes in preparation by the Ministry of Repatriation and would prove an invaluable preparatory stage in this work.

While the Army remains as a Military organization this preliminary work can only be carried on by and from within the Army in harmony with military needs, discipline and organization; but at the same time it is desirable that this Educational organization within the Army should maintain a close liaison with the Ministry of Repatriation so as to be able to hand over the fully or partly trained man, at the point when he ceases to be a soldier and becomes a civilian to the Ministry of Repatriation with a certified history of his training, an estimate of

his capacity and a statement of his desires in the matter of Repatriation.

It is further apparent that valuable co-operative work may be accomplished each for the other organization, since whereas the A.I.F. Education Establishment would be able to give an estimate of the proportions in which men are directing their thoughts to various callings, the Repatriation Ministry could advise whether the proportion of men desiring to devote themselves to any particular calling is likely to be too great for Australia to absorb or make provision for.

A.I.F. Education organization could then be used to bring other and more suitable callings before the men.

It is proposed to prepare index cards of all the men in the forces stating their ages and previous occupations, the callings they intend to follow upon return to civil life and the special professional or technical training they have received in connection with A.I.F. All necessary certificates and registers will be carefully kept with a view to obtaining recognition for the work so done from Universities, Technical Colleges, Guilds, Trade Unions, and generally all Registration Authorities.

English Universities have given a general promise to recognise the work done under these conditions in connection with the Armies, but no attempt has yet been made to reduce the general promise to precise conditions. This would be a matter of negotiation.

The following British Institutions have already notified us that they will make special arrangements for the recognition of Classes held out here and the award of Certificates—Royal Society of Arts, City and Guilds of London Institute, Institute of Bankers, the Royal Sanitary Institute. This list will doubtless be added to very largely as the work develops, and as communications with other bodies become finalised.

It is desired that the Commonwealth Government seek recognition on similar terms from all necessary authorities

in Australia, but at this stage it is only asked that sympathetic preparatory assurance be sought from such Institutions. It is hoped that evidence of sound and satisfactory work as the organization develops will be submitted sufficient to warrant entire confidence in making application for full recognition.

The Canadian Corps has had a partial scheme of education in operation for some time under the name of "The University of Vimy Ridge." The New Zealand Force has also taken action in the matter.

The British Army has been studying the question for some time and a beginning has been made at G.H.Q. Education Officers have been appointed to each of the British Armies, and they are preparing for very large activities. The various Educational activities will be co-ordinated as far as possible. Conferences have been held and others will be held at regular intervals. All correspondence and proposals are circulated between the Education Establishments of the Forces. The Imperial Authorities readily recognise that our Australian conditions are so diverse that we must have our own organization with a special Australian outlook.

They ask, however, that we shall not act independently in the matter of text books, as a great demand is anticipated, and in view of the shortage of books and paper careful central arrangements will be necessary.

Of necessity the work must develop from small beginnings and its success will largely depend upon finding the right kind of teachers, and inducing a proper understanding and keen interest among all ranks of the A.I.F.

There are such large numbers of teachers to be found in the A.I.F. with previous experience in almost all kinds of instruction that we believe this success can be achieved by a process of testing and careful selection, but it is quite probable that it may be necessary to call upon Australia to supply teachers and supervisors in subjects where the resources of A.I.F. have proved inadequate.

Operations will gradually be extended throughout all units of the Army by means of short courses as relief from military duty may permit.

In this way part of the work will be accomplished during the period of the war, but far more important than this will be to create the proper expectancy for peace conduct and duties in the minds of the men, to collect the necessary statistical information, to gain experience in a novel experiment, and thus to make possible sound plans for full development when hostilities cease.

At such a time it will be the endeavour without delay to turn the Army into a hive of educational energies. Something great and adequate must be prepared beforehand to meet that emergency, and a wide and comprehensive scheme for education offers the greatest opportunity for serving the Army, the men and the State. There are great resources for the task within the Army. Our Technical and Mechanical Sections would at once be turned into schools for all branches of technology. Experts in such subjects and in all matters pertaining to land and commercial pursuits will be employed beforehand in getting their plans drawn up and facilities for their execution will be arranged and similarly with regard to all other studies for which preparatory need is revealed.

The whole scheme needs to be approached, conceived and carried out in a large and comprehensive manner and in a generous spirit. If this is so there is every reason to believe that the spirit and capacity inherent in the A.I.F. is capable of making a great success of the undertaking.

Libraries and apparatus on a large scale must be got ready, and the ultimate cost is bound to be considerable but no cost could be more readily justifiable from every consideration of military, civil and personal welfare.

A preliminary credit of £5,000 has been asked for from the Commonwealth Government, and further authority will be asked to meet the expenses of the organization as need arises. The salaries of the personnel engaged in the

direct work of this establishment will doubtless be provided as part of the cost of the A.I.F. in the performance of its military functions, but the cost of the actual equipment of the Educational Establishment, *e.g.*, libraries, text books, apparatus, etc., would seem to belong rather to the Department of Repatriation than the Department of Defence.

Canada expressed the view that the expenditure upon this establishment would probably not exceed that of one week of war, and that preparation for a fresh and noble entry into peace was well worth the cost.

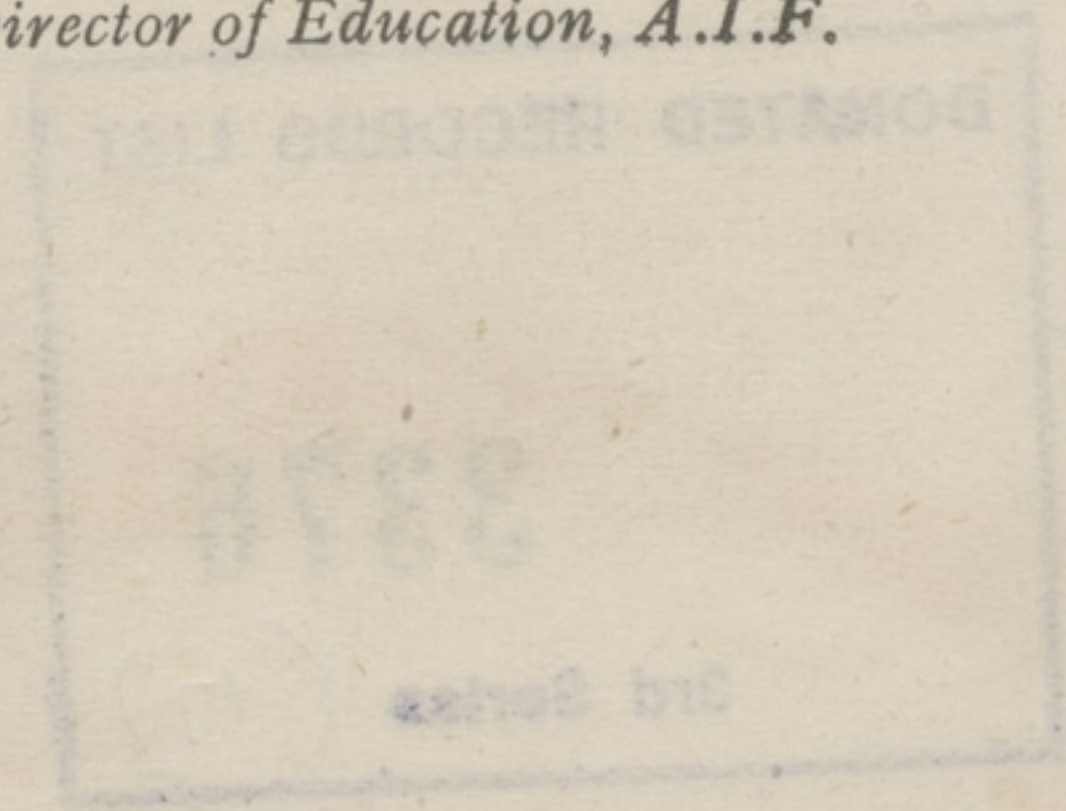
The Imperial and Canadian Governments recognise how great is the need and how great the opportunity in the case of their Armies. For the Australians, sundered so far and for so long a period from their own country, the need and the opportunity is by so much the greater.

From Army papers captured in the German trenches and other sources of information we learn that the Germans are carrying on a very thorough training among the men in their line. It would seem that almost complete Universities and Technical Schools are kept at work amongst them. Even lectures and studies in national music are conducted. They are foreseeing enough to know that the nation which makes the most rapid recovery after the war in the pursuits of peace will gain a commanding position in the world.

"Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

G. M. LONG (BISHOP),

Director of Education, A.I.F.



Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers,
and Men of the Australian Imperial Force.

It is now just four years that we have been
serving together, often through days of hardship and
peril, and often through times of well-deserved
success.

During this time we have
come to know each other
and to realize the value of our
other.



AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

No words can express all I feel
for the magnificent work which has been done by
the Australian Imperial Force during these long four years.
It is well known and recognized throughout the world
out the British Empire that throughout the world
and now we have peace is being achieved after a
victory in which the Australian Imperial Force has taken so
large a share.

From others with peace, the world is
being built on a basis of peace and justice.
It is to be established and to be maintained
in the time yet we shall be able to take
them until we are assured of the complete and
permanent fulfillment of our Empire.
The world is now in the hands of democracy.
I wish to make

To the
**Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers,
and Men
of the Australian Imperial Force.**

It is now just four years that we have been serving together, often through days of hardship and peril, and often through times of well-deserved success.

During this time I hope and think we have come to know each other well, and I trust have realised how rightly we have confidence in each other.

No words of mine can possibly express all I feel for the magnificent work which has been done by the Australian soldier during these long four years. It is well known and recognised, not only throughout the British Empire, but throughout the world—and now we have peace in sight, and peace after a victory in which the Australian soldier has taken so large a share.

Even then, with peace there are still difficult times before us. Faith in our recent foe cannot quickly be established, and it may be that for some little time yet we shall be able to relax no precautions, until we are assured of the complete and honest fulfilment of our terms.

Then will come the difficult time of demobilisation, and it is regarding this that I wish to make

a personal appeal to every single member of the A.I.F. in the full confidence that it will be met as every other appeal to face and tackle the strongest positions has ever been met by the Australian soldier. Never has the name of Australia stood higher than it does now throughout the world, thanks to the bravery of her soldiers, and it is up to every one of us to see that this is maintained, and that no reproach can be cast on the Australian Flag owing to any behaviour of ours.

The time of demobilisation will undoubtedly be difficult and irksome—I fully realise what great personal self-restraint will certainly be required—but if each individual of us makes up his mind to do his best during these times, realising the good name we bear, I feel confident that all will go off well.

I want you to remember that everything possible will be done to look after and help the troops during this period, while every energy will be strained to get men back to their homes as soon as this possibly can be done. You will have to realise, however, that there is a great shortage of shipping, and that there must be a considerable inevitable delay.

Play the game, boys, during this time, as you have always done, and add still more to the deep debt of gratitude which will always be acknowledged to you by the Empire and remembered by me as your comrade and commander.

In the Field,
14th November 1918.

W. B. Bidwood.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE.

MELBOURNE, 28th January, 1920

No.

Dear General,

Your letter of January 26th received and I am glad to have the backing of your powerful opinion on this matter (Pay of Permanent Forces), which I yesterday brought before Cabinet, but which is not yet finally determined. I am glad to say my recommendations seemed to be favorably regarded by the Members of the Cabinet.

The question of superannuation has already been definitely promised in the Government's Policy Speech, for the whole of the Public Service - including the Navy and Army - and I understand that a scheme will be submitted during the next Session.

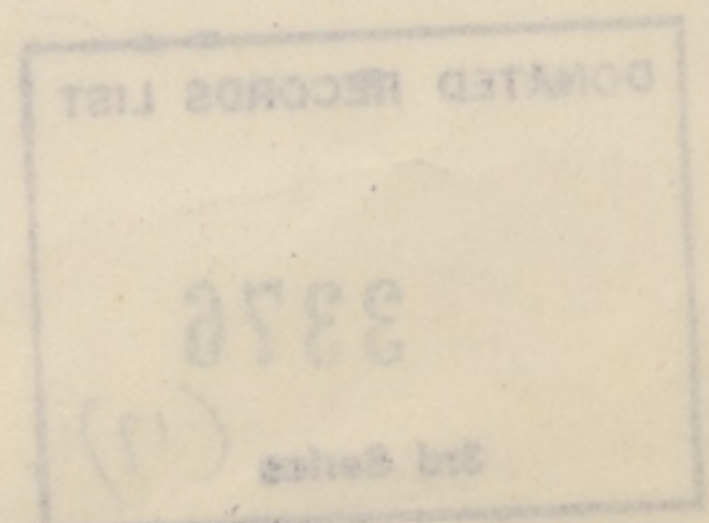
In regard to the question raised in our conversation the other day, as to returned A.I.F. officers still wearing badges of A.I.F. rank, I have ascertained that the reason Generals Ryrice and Tivey are retaining these badges, is that they are not yet demobilized, being still on A.I.F. leave, and therefore, entitled to hold their temporary rank until demobilized.

With kind regards,

Yours faithfully,

E. F. Pearce

General Sir W.R. Birdwood, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,
K.C.S.I., C.I.E., D.S.O.,
Federal Government House,
Melbourne.
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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REPATRIATION,

HEAD-QUARTERS, MELBOURNE.

17th March, 1920.

My dear General Birdwood,

I must first apologise for the delay in acknowledging yours of the 4th instant, but unfortunately my personal correspondence passed me both going to and coming from Sydney owing to a misunderstanding as to my movements.

I need hardly say that I appreciate very much the interest you have displayed in the work of this Department, and also the spirit in which you write and equally so the opinion you have been good enough to express as to Australia's repatriation efforts generally.

You raise two points, one as to the delay in placing men in employment, the other the absence of provision for curative or occupational employment for men in hospital.

With regard to the first of these as you observe it is impossible to find employment for every man immediately on discharge. When the rapid rate at which the men have returned during the past six or eight months and the serious disorganisation, amounting in many trades to complete paralysis, resulting from first the Seamen's Strike and then later the Marine Engineers' Strike are considered I feel that Australia can challenge comparison with any portion of the Empire in the rapidity with which its men have been restored to civil life. The percentage of unemployment to discharge was barely 4% until the occurrence of the Seamen's Strike above referred to, when it immediately rose to nearly 8%, the men rendered idle by reason of the Strike being restored to the Department's Unemployment Register. Following the settlement of that dispute the figures steadily fell until they were under 6%, this notwithstanding that men were returning at an average of 20,000 per month. The second strike promptly sent the percentage up again but this is now again on the decline. It is necessary to recognise that among those remaining on the books of the Department as wanting employment are the difficult cases which have accumulated since demobilisation commenced. Naturally the payment of a not illiberal sustenance allowance is an inducement to men of the type referred to to hang on as long as they can, but it is, as I am sure you will recognise, very difficult in dealing with considerable numbers to decide whether men are chronic wasters or have been unsettled by their war experience. If the Department has erred at all with regard to these men it has been in taking the sympathetic view of their case and in giving chance after chance. This necessarily keeps the unemployment figures up. I cannot present definite figures but my assumption is that the average of unemployment to discharges through the whole period has not been more than 5% and that making an allowance for the chronic cases referred to the average period for which men awaiting employment have drawn sustenance has been three weeks.

With regard to the second point raised in your letter it is a little difficult for me to put this

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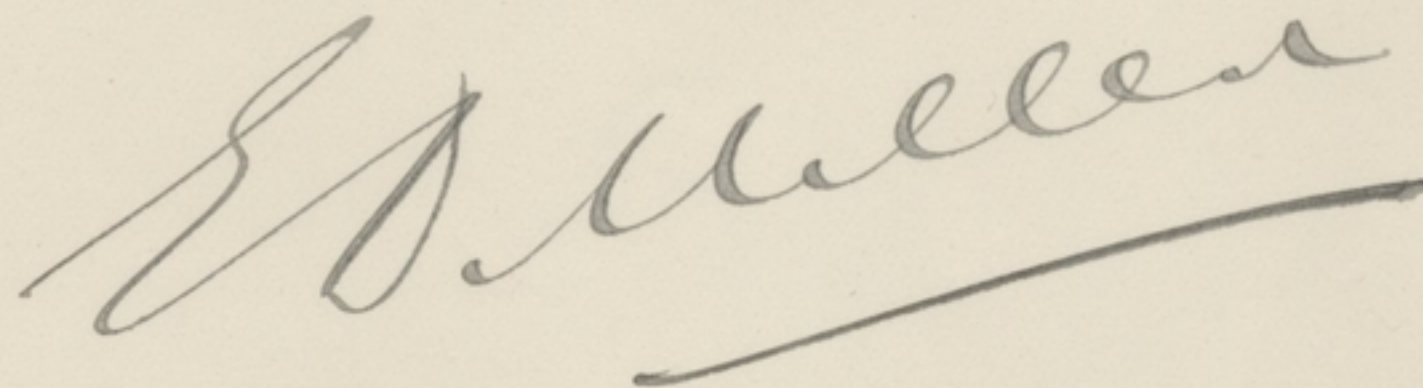
Department's case without appearing to become a critic of the action of the Defence Department. You rightly recognise that there must be a definite line of demarcation as between the two Departments. It is impossible for this Department to accept any responsibility for men prior to discharge seeing that they are entirely under the control of Defence. I certainly agree with you that men would be far better in employment or training rather than to be left to idle about and I always understood that the Defence Department claimed to be making sufficient provision in the way of curative workshops and other opportunities for training. The Defence Department certainly has established such shops in some of its hospitals. It occurs to me that your letter written after your trip to Tasmania is based largely on experience in that State. If this is so Tasmania is in this regard not at all representative as owing to its comparative isolation and the smallness of numbers concerned matters have not been developed there as I believe to be the case in the remaining States.

Whilst I think it only fair to this Department to state the case as above I can assure you I am fully sympathetic with the view you express as to the advisability of encouraging men to work. In all the Institutions which this Department is creating or has in contemplation work both as a training and a curative agent will be promoted to the fullest extent compatible with the condition of the inmates.

I very much regret that your very busy time in Australia has prevented me seeking an opportunity of placing before you more fully many of the lesser known but highly important activities of the Repatriation Department but in view of the kindly interest displayed in your letter I should be glad of such an opportunity at your convenience.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,



General Sir W.R. Birdwood, Bart., G.C.M.G., etc.,

ADELAIDE. S.A.