

Referendum

1917

CABLE-GRAM received from DEFENCE, Melbourne - 12.11.17

WX.933. Secret and Confidential. Government have decided to again refer question of compulsory service overseas to a Referendum of people including A.I.F. abroad on December 22nd. I assume that A.I.F. Divisions are now resting and refitting after recent fighting as on previous occasion. In view of extreme importance to Empire and Australia that Referendum should be carried this time and in view of experience shows how condition of troops affected their votes on last occasion, it is imperative that they should be kept out of firing line and given best possible conditions until end of the year. Cable if this can be arranged.

PEARCE.

CABLEGRAM sent to DEFENCE, Melbourne - 13.11.17

T.1144. With reference to your WX933 Secret and Confidential. Everything possible is being done here to the extent that circumstances will permit. As far as I can forecast the Referendum comes at the extremely psychological moment to be favorable to the troops who are in good heart after the recent successful fighting. Most of them are now resting in comfortable quarters. The remainder are in a quiet part of the line. It seems to me to be important however that you should send by cable without delay full details concerning exemptions and assurance that conscription is only for the duration of the present war, etc. In fact all information that will help men in voting should be sent early. I have already instructed Griffiths to cable you about this from London.

BIRDWOOD.