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SOLDIERS AND PUBLIC LIFE

There is only a narrow margin between the sublime and the ridiculous. Similarly the line of demarcation between politics and an open-minded interest in national affairs is not clearly defined. Thus it is that many soldiers feel dubious regarding the extent to which they may engage the League in matters affecting public interests. The position calls for the exercise of the broad vision which was developed by travel and intercourse with foreign conditions. Unquestionably the soldier, the permanent citizen of the community has acquired knowledge which many of its civilian neighbours lack; the soldiers have developed a perspicacity which would be wholly wanting had their vocations remained uninterrupted by the call to arms.

It was repeatedly said of Australian soldiers during the war, that they had raised, by their sacrifices and devotion, and by their gallantry and courage, the status of our nation. They were the cream of the nation they exemplified, and now that they have abandoned the sword and have returned to the ploughshare, it is their golden duty to prosper the nation by the lavish disbursement of the skill and knowledge they have acquired in their travels. Those of us who have discovered the latent spirit of leadership, or who have been apt in counsels and judgment, should not deny our nation the right to profit by these natural and developed-qualities.

The individual, although a "Leaguer," need have no scruples regarding his personal activities, and so he may serve his country still in his natural capacity as a leader or in an advisory manner. However, no matter what phase of life we occupy, no matter how mean the office: as long as we give our own fair land the benefit of our widest intellect, coupled with moderation and forbearance as dictated by our service under hazardous conditions, so long will our realm prosper.

We are all craftsmen as it was ordained, and we have developed or neglected Nature's gifts. The craftsmen who embarked on overseas service, almost without exception (and perhaps unwittingly) acquired deeper knowledge. Let us with our open minds realise how vital it is for posterity that we should lay worthy foundations to bear the edifice of national-goods. Critical situations invite more attention than the commonplace, and such an epoch is approaching and is already close at hand. The best the country can obtain for its leaders is necessary, and whether for the Road Boards, Councils, or political leaders, it is exigent that the best material be chosen. The result would then be automatic and we would soon reap the benefit of our sacrifices.

Let the returned men come forward to help our land through its difficulties, as they did before, and those who can not withhold their services, even though they were required in Parliament.

Some men, soldiers and thinkers, who might have lent their very soul to their country, feared to do so on account of the fact that certain men have gained political ascendancy "on the back of the League." Admittedly, men have won seats owing to their successful claim to the soldiers' votes; yet this should not deter any soldier from giving of his best to his country when that country so vitally needs this class of leader to come forward. There are a few soldiers in our various councils from the local Progress Associations to the head of the Commonwealth; but there are not enough: they should permeate the whole community; so that the expensive education Australia gave her men in War days may become a perpetual asset.

Leaders alone do not build the nation, the led have also their part to play. In these days of democracy the voter is a most important consideration and if more soldiers came forward we feel confident that the soldier voter would stand by them.

At this stage we strongly urge diggers to contest every available vacancy at the forthcoming Road Board elections. With its members controlling public affairs, the League would be a greater power in the land, and its honorable, just and reasonable objects are so much nearer the goal of achievement.

DEFENCE.

Representations were made to the Minister of Defence, viewing with alarm the inadequate measures provided by the Commonwealth Government for the defence of Australia, and stating that the League is of opinion that a more adequate system of land force, training, tanks, munitions and modern equipment is of vital importance.

A reply has been received to the representation from the Minister for Defence stating that he welcomes the further evidence they afford of a sustained interest in the matter of Australia's defence on the part of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia. On a matter of such vital importance as the adequate protection of the Commonwealth, it is well the League should like the League to arouse public attention from time to time.

The Minister states, as no doubt the League is aware, the Government in which he has the honor to hold the Defence portfolio, gave serious consideration to this question when framing the estimates for the current financial year, and approved of a developmental programme, which will extend over five years, at an approximate annual cost of £1,000,000, exclusive of the capital cost of new cruisers and submarines. The details of this programme, which is intended shall be steadily maintained, are fully set forth in his statement to Parliament when the Defence Estimates were tabled.

PENSIONS TO WIDOWED MOTHERS

Pension Commission was made to the Minister for Repatriation, stating that in lieu of the present discretionary powers to the Repatriation Commission to make a living allowance, the pensions of Soldiers' Widowed mothers be increased to not less than £2-2/- per week.

A reply has now been received from the Minister in charge of Repatriation that after considering the Repatriation Commission on the subject, it is considered desirable to retain the present system whereby the pension of £2 per fortnight be paid to the widowed mother of a deceased unmarried soldier under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act is supplemented in various cases at the discretion of the Commission by the payment of a living allowance, in order to ensure to her an income not exceeding £2-2/- per week.

The Minister adds it is intended that this arrangement should make special provision for those women in need of financial assistance through the loss of their sons in service, that is, those who were dependant, or would have become dependant upon them for subsistence.
STATE EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

25/2/25.


Apologies were received from Messrs. Cornwell and Watt.

Employment.—The Secretary reported that the action had been taken on Resolution 83 of the 9th Annual Congress, and that the matter was in the hands of Mr. Tindall (Employment Officer) and Mr. Gaynor.

Secretary's Report.—The Secretary read a report covering the operations of the League during the past month. The report was received and thanks tendered to the Secretary and Staff.

Invitation.—A letter was received from the Dalwallinu Sub-Branch inviting the State Secretary and State President to visit them on the 28th instant, the occasion being a grand gymkhana. It was stated that both the President and Secretary were unable to attend, and Mr. T. W. Bateson was appointed as representative.

Federal Correspondence.—Resolution 39 (Federal Congress) re War Service Homes.—A letter was read and received from the Federal Executive in connection with the resolution, which had been referred back to the Federal Executive. The letter was received, and it was decided that no further action be taken.

Alien Immigration.—A letter was received from the Federal Executive dealing with Alien Immigration, showing what steps the Commonwealth Government had taken to control the influx of alien migrants to Australia. The letter was received, and it was decided that a copy be forwarded to the State Secretary for information.

Pensions.—A letter was read and received from the Federal Executive dealing with Resolution 37 of the Federal Congress. The letter was received.

Business of Committee.—The Federal Executive advised that the report of the Royal Commission on War Disabilities had been presented to the Federal Cabinet and referred back to the Minister for Repatriation for comments. Immediately same was printed, copies would be sent to each State. The letter was received.

Resolution 40 (Federal Congress).—A letter was received from the Federal Executive in connection with the Caretaker of Kalbarrie School. The Secretary reported on action taken in this matter and read letters to and from Mr. Drew, the Minister for Education.

Moved by Mr. Colvin, seconded by Mr. Tindall, that future schedule of payments to obtain a deputation to the Acting Premier in connection with this matter.

Carried.

Anzac Day.—A letter was read and received from the Perth Sub-Branch asking the Executive to make representations to the Government and municipal bodies to ensure that all ex-service men and women obtain Anzac Day as a paid holiday.

It was moved by Mr. Isaac, seconded by Mr. Egan, that the letter be received and that the Perth Sub-Branch be informed of the decision of the last two Congresses in connection with this matter.—Carried.

Primary Producers' Association, Mullalup.—A letter was received from the Primary Producers' Association, Mullalup Branch, asking if any objection would be raised to them holding their Annual Show on Anzac Day.

Moved by Mr. Wedd, seconded by Mr. Cooke, that the Association be asked to alter the date of their show, in order to adhere to the observances of the day as accepted by Act of Parliament.—Carried.

Celebration.—A letter was received from the Sub-Branch at Bunbury requesting that a Monster Parade and March Past of ex-members of the A.I.F. be arranged for Anzac Day.

As this matter has already been taken into consideration by the Committee, the letter was received.

Tennis and other Sporting Associations.—The President drew attention to a paragraph appearing in the "Listening Post," stating that the Lawn Tennis Association had arranged fixtures to be played on Anzac Day. It was moved by Mr. Bateson, seconded by Mr. Philip, that the attention of the Tennis Association be drawn to the fact that their fixtures have been arranged for Anzac Day, and that they be asked to defer the fixtures. It was moved that the Acting Secretary be asked to defer any fixtures they may have for Anzac Day, and the letter to be published.—Carried.

Case of E. Neal.—A letter was read and received from Mr. Neal, who was informed by the Branch of the League requesting the Executive to press for an inquiry into this man's case. It was moved by Mr. Colvin, seconded by Mr. Wedd, that the Sub-Branch be informed that in the case of either the League or the man himself, to take any further action.—Carried.

Reports.—Organisation.—Colonel Collett reported on the meeting of the Finance Committee, together with himself and Mr. McDonald, in connection with the re-organisation of the Executive Office.

Moved by Col. Collett, seconded by Mr. Bader, that the report be adopted.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Isaac, seconded by Mr. Cooke, that the matter be referred for two weeks, and that it be the first item on the agenda for the next meeting.—Lost.

Discussion then ensued, and Mr. Butler asked for a ruling regarding a motion standing on the books dated April, 1922, in connection with the non-appointment of Assistant Secretary.

Minutes of this date were then produced showing that such a resolution had been passed.

A further amendment was then moved by Mr. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. McDonald, that all of the report be adopted with the exception of that paragraph concerning the appointment of an Assistant State Secretary.—Carried.

Notice of motion was then given by Mr. Bader that the resolution dated April, 1922, re non-appointment of Assistant Secretary, be rescinded.

Notice of motion was given by Mr. Isaac that in the event of favourable consideration to the Committee's report regarding the appointment of Assistant State Secretary, that the position be advertised.

Regarding the Committee's recommendation that the Finance Committee be increased in number, it was decided that Messrs. Bolton and Butler be added to the present personnel of the Committee.

Notice of motion was given by Mr. Colvin that a future schedule of payments proposed to be passed for payment be submitted with a statement.

Art Union.—Mr. Isaac submitted a report on the progress of the Art Union, and stated that the Committee had resolved, (1) that no organiser be appointed at present; (2) that the present Auditor undertake the same duties for the Art Union.

A general discussion ensued, during which Mr. Bolton stated that this Art Union, in consequence of no organiser being appointed, may not show the best results, and he desired his opinion recorded.

Mr. Cooke submitted a minority report stating that he had disagreed with the Art Union Committee concerning the matter of non-appointment of an organiser.


Present.—Messrs. Freedman, Isaac, Collett, Morrell, Philip, McDonald, Humphrey, Colvin, Bateson, Zeffert, and others.
McCarthy, Egan, Bolton, Watt, Tyler, Bader and Butler.

Apologies were received from Messrs. Cornell, Wedd and Cooke.

Call of E. Humphreys. — Mr. Humphreys drew attention to an article in the Bumbury "South-West Times" with reference to the case of Mr. Neal of Bumbury, and considered that as some reference there had been made to the inactivity of the R.S.L., the State Secretary should make a reply in the journal concerned. Mr. Humphreys promised to supply a copy of the paper.

Secretary’s Report. — The State Secretary read Report No. 4 covering the League’s activities for the fortnight.

Employment Bureau. — A letter was read from the Federal President concerning the continuance of the Federal grant for the Employment Bureau, and intimating that he would again approach the Government for an extension in consequence of representations made to him by Rabbi Freedman.

Moved by Mr. Zeffert, seconded by Mr. Morrell that this matter be discussed with the Prime Minister on his approaching visit.—Carried.

Caretaker Kalgoorlie School. — After discussion following upon the reading of a letter from the Acting Premier, setting out that this matter was entirely within the province of the Minister for Education, it was moved by Mr. Watt that the Committee be instructed to prepare a statement of the whole matter and give due publicity in the press. Seconded by Mr. Morrell.

Lost.

An amendment was proposed by Mr. Zeffert, seconded by Mr. Humphreys that negotiations be continued by the President, and that he report at the next Executive meeting.—Carried.

Inspector Aborigines. — A letter was received from Mr. Seymour, stating that he had been unsuccessful for this position and he believed a civilian was appointed.

The State Secretary reported that Mr. Simpson had informed him that a civilian would probably be appointed, and who considered the civilian the best man available.

On the resolution of Mr. Zeffert, seconded by Mr. Philip, it was decided to leave the matter in the hands of Mr. Morrell, who was requested to report later.

Representation Workers Homes Board. — The Secretary read a letter from the Acting Premier stating that the Government could see no reason to make any change in the Local Board’s constitution.

After discussion it was decided on the motion of Mr. Bateson, seconded by Mr. Morrell, that the following Committee should represent the League on a deputation to Mr. Bruce: Messrs. Cornell, Humphreys, McDonald, Watt, Colvin, with the State President and Secretary.

It was also decided that this Committee meet at the Institute at 3 p.m. on Friday afternoon to arrange the order of business for the Deputation.

Formation Sub-branch at Narembeen. — After a wire had been read from Mr. Scarr of Narembeen, concerning the gathering of Returned Soldiers at that centre on Saturday next, the 14th inst., and it has also been explained that the Committee intended to tour this line next month, it was moved by Mr. Bolton, seconded by Mr. McCarthy that the Secretary write to the branch concerned explaining the position that owing to the Prime Minister’s visit, the invitation could not be accepted.

This motion was lost and the following amendment carried at the instance of Mr. Philip, seconded by Mr. Bader, that a representative visit the district.

On the resolution of Mr. Colvin, seconded by Mr. McCarthy it was decided that failing Mr. Pady being able to visit Narembeen, the State President be requested to arrange for a representative.—Carried.

Assistant Secretary. — The notice of motion previously moved by Mr. Bader was then formally presented by Mr. McCarthy, that the resolution passed in April, 1922, that no Assistant Secretary be appointed be now rescinded. Seconded by Mr. Watt.—Carried.

Moved by Col. Collett, seconded by Mr. Morrell, that that portion of the organisation Committee’s report previously deferred be now adopted.—Carried.

After considerable discussion following upon an amendment moved by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Philip, that the position of Assistant Secretary be advertised, the motion was carried and the whole report of the Organisation Committee adopted.

Notice of Motion. — Mr. Colvin then moved the motion, notice of which had been given, that a schedule of accounts be submitted with the Finance Committee’s report to the Executive meeting for approval. This was seconded by Mr. Zeffert.—Carried.

Auditor. — Moved by Mr. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Zeffert, that in future the League Auditor shall conduct the audit of all State Executive activities.—Carried.

Reports. — Mr. Bateson presented a report of his recent visit to Dalwallinu, showing a very satisfactory position at that centre. The report was adopted and a vote of thanks passed to Mr. Bateson.

Art Union. — A report was presented by the Art Union Committee showing that matters in connection with the Art Union were proceeding satisfactorily. The report was adopted.

In connection with this report it was stated that the Fremantle, Boulder and other sub-branches had inquired concerning the allotment of the profits from the Art Union and what proportion would be given to sub-branches. As the report at present unable to deal with any applications owing to previous resolution concerning the two current funds, Mr. Humphreys gave notice of motion that the League Auditor shall conduct the audit of all State Executive activities.—Carried.

Soldier Settlers’ Conference. — The State Secretary formally presented resolutions passed at the recent Settlers’ Conference for enforcement by the Executive, and the whole proceedings were adopted with the exception of Item 62. It was resolved that this matter be deferred for further consideration.

It was further resolved that on the motion of Mr. Wat, and Mr. McCarthy that Mr. Pady and Mr. McDonald be appointed a committee to deal with the position at Harvey.

R.S.P.C.A. — Mr. Harvey presented a report on the present position and also stated that Mr. J. Diffell, M.I.C., would shortly be a candidate for Parliament, and considered that he should be opposed by a soldier. Mr. Humphreys also mentioned that Road/Board Elections were approaching, and he moved that the “Listening Post” be asked to request all soldiers who
18/3/25.

ANZAC ADDRESSES TO SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Present.—Messrs. Freedman, Morrell, Philp, McDonald, Humphrey, Cornett, Pady, Colvin, Bateson, Zeffer, McCarthy, Egan, Bolton, Watt, Cooke and Bader.

Apologies were received from Messrs. Collett, Tyler and Butler.

School Addresses on Anzac Day.

Opening the discussion the president (Rabbi D. I. Freedman) made a statement regarding the position that had arisen. He said that the custom of addressing school children on such subjects as the greatness of the Empire, the worthiness of citizenship in that Empire, and the duties of the children both to the Empire and to their own country—Australia—had arisen before the war in connection with the celebration of Empire Day. After the war it was recognized that the birth of Australia as a nation was being celebrated on Anzac Day and without any definite plan the custom arose of giving lectures to the children on that day which were calculated to instil into them the principles of patriotism without any glorification of war. It was a mistake in his opinion to think that there was any opposition between the League of Nations and the celebration of Anzac Day. As a matter of fact it was Anzac Day that had made the League of Nations possible. A very difficult situation had been created by the Government. He had received a telegram from the Federal President of the League expressing satisfaction with the proposed arrangements for Anzac Day and congratulating the Executive upon the stand it had taken in regard to late developments. He was sure that the League would bear in mind the argument was entirely with the Government, and would adopt every dignified means at its disposal to induce the Government to withdraw the interdict.

After considerable discussion it was moved by Mr. McDonald and seconded by Mr. Cooke, "That this Executive of the R.S.L. deplores the decision of the State Government banning Anzac Day addresses in the State Schools, and that it respectfully requests the Acting Premier to receive a deputation from the Executive, with a view to revoking such decision or making such modification thereto, as may be acceptable to the R.S.L."—Carried.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Watt and seconded by Mr. Philp that the R.S.L., in order to give the citizens of the State an opportunity of expressing their protest against the decree banning Anzac Day addresses to school children, strongly urges its Sub-Branches throughout the State to call public meetings in their districts at the earliest opportunity, and that this Executive arrange a public meeting in Perth.—Lost.

On the motion of Mr. Bolton, seconded by Mr. Zeffert, it was decided that the deputation consist of the State President, State Secretary, Messrs. Cornett, Humphrey and McCarthy.—Carried.

It was then decided that the report of the deputation be taken as the first business at the ordinary meeting of the Executive to be held on Wednesday, 25th instant.

Mrs. Kidson's Poem.—Mr. Zeffert then submitted for the perusal of delegates, a poem written by Mrs. Mary Kidson, and it was decided that this be left in the hands of the Secretary to be used in any way he may think fit, and that a letter of thanks be sent to Mrs. Kidson.

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CROWN PRINCE AND BUDDOON.

In making a play of words with his title by calling him the Crown Prince, people designated Wilhelm Hohenzollern Junior more accurately than perhaps they intended to.

A clown he was as leader of armies; a clown in his ordinary conduct in the streets of Charleville, notably with street urchins and shop girls, and this was borne out by a book written by a reporter, extract from which are published in the "Weekly Despatch.

Street Adventures.

From the time of his arrival at Charleville, the Crown Prince gained the favours of the street urchins by joining in their games.

Sometimes he amused himself by throwing his official plumes to the ground and watching the fight for the coin. At other times he had an hour at billiards with the youngsters, and enjoyed showing himself to be more skilled at the game than his partners in torn trousers and broken boots. These two traits he was to keep.

We have seen him, in the Place Carnot, organise an obstacle race over the heaps of sand placed in readiness for scattering about the square for one of the many distributions of Iron Crosses and other decorations at which he presided there.

He was the first runner, leaping lightly over the heaps in company with his grey-hounds. Then he marked out a course for the urchins, and gave the winner of the race a mark.

Rare Visits to Front.

Although he wore the uniform of a General, and, on the occasion of a certain military parade, flaunted the impressive costume of the Death's Head Hussars, the Crown Prince was never taken seriously, either by his officers or by the French of the invaded regions.

Ludendorff regarded him as an absolute negligible quantity. Hindenburg evaded paying him the deference usual in a Court so exacting as that of the Hohenzollerns. Whenever he addressed them it was to beg a favour, and even then he was not certain of getting what he wanted.

He found himself in the same predicament when the command of the First Army was transferred from Valenciennes to Charleville, and when the Inspector of Lines of Communication established himself there in the person of a real Boche brute, Lieutenant-General von Heydendrech, and made the French population feel the weight of his heavy German heel. The Prince had no more influence with him than his junior subalterns, and Heydendrech did not hesitate to disregard his requests if they were not considered regular or sufficiently justified.

He may have indulged in an illusion in the rest of France when the newspapers spoke of the Crown Prince's armies. Many people may have imagined that, wishing to go down to posterity as a great captain, he lived in the midst of his troops, surrounded by his General Staff, and shared the dangers of his men.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Wilhelm Junior never got to the front, except by accident, when the command had prepared a big affair, when success was in sight, and when his august presence was required to revive the spirits of the "field greys," whose morale sank after each offensive, as a result of the terrible sights on the battlefield and the monstrous sacrifices imposed.

On such occasions the Prince went to collect the laurels gathered by his soldiers, still hypnotised by his name. Sometimes he left his chateau in the evening, and returned in the morning in his uniform as a captain, having treated his officers and his partners in torn boots. These treated him without respect.

He would then mark out a course of square for one of the many distributions of Iron Crosses and other decorations at which he presided there. He was the first runner, leaping lightly over the heaps in company with his grey-hounds. Then he marked out a course for the urchins, and gave the winner of the race a mark.

A Leader's Job.

His staff was quartered in the Place Carnot, a vast square with comfortable and elegant houses.

The drawing room and the living rooms of the residence of a former Senator for the department of the Ardennes became the residence of the Crown Prince came every day to dictate his report.

The "Parole," as his report was called, was the greatest military achievement of his Imperial Highness.

He used to arrive every morning at 9 o'clock insides of blood-red car, driven by himself, the shield of the prince, the royal crown. He would enter the big drawing room, from which had been removed the marble bust of the deceased Senator, which his officers had relegated to a corner and then covered with a crumpled top hat.

The Crown Prince would sit unceremoniously on the edge of a marqueterie table, which had been turned into a writing table, and, lighting a cigarette of light tobacco, in which he frequently indulged, would bandy jokes with his officers for half an hour or so.

He would then look over telegrams from his army commanders, have the replies dictated by his Chief of Staff, and then, serious conversation being at an end, he would take a drive round the town before lunch, while his Majesty's troops were being slaughtered, far from their chief, for the glory of mighty Germany and her dangerous Sovereign.

The same kind of comedy took place at 3. Then the Crown Prince used to look over the communiqué from headquarters, then return to his chateau, not without having arranged beforehand a little demonstration on the part of soldiers who stood in front of the offices of the General Staff and hailed the heir of the Empire with "Hochs" as they had been ordered to shout.

CHANGES.

(By "Lion").

Dick's reinforcement had reached Salisbury Plains in the autumn of 1916, and was camped at Rollstone for the completion of its training. Dick's "Tock Beer" was paraded with the host of Australian Troops to put on parade for the King's Review. The seventy odd thousand Australian and New Zealand troops got soaked to the marrow in their patriotic endeavour, and Dick was pleased that some of the names applied to Kit's were worn on his birth certificate. Of course, they recognised that Georgie was not to blame, and they gave him some din-kum Aussie cheers.

Standing about in the wet and deep grass, after weeks of inactivity on board a troopship, was not long free from sequel, and Dick's especial pal, Don Southey, was soon sent to Parkhouse Hospital with a severe bout of influenza. Don was an Anglo-Aussie and had come from Southampton, where his parents still resided. A few weeks after the review the end came for Don, and he died. During that week Southey was sick and had no mind to think of the number of diggers who "went out to it."

Don Southey's parents were permitted to bury their son at the old family cemetery, where the tombs of his forebears were bedded with moss; and it fell to Dick's lot to escort the remains from Parkhouse to Southampton. A motor ambulance conveyed the coffin to Amesbury, where a special coach awaited its reception. The coach was attached to a train which proceeded on its way. At Salisbury the first of five changes of trains came, each was a rush, and Dick found that after closing the line a few miles of bridge his train was ready to start. He could find out whether the coach was attached or not, so he clambered aboard without further ado.

At Southampton he was alarmed to find out that the coach was not with that train, and so he got the Station Master busy—ringing up to find out where it was. Every avenue open for enquiry was searched, but no trace could be found of the coach. "Anyhow," thought Dick, "the undertakers aren't here yet, which is a blessing." "You'd better get some lunch and call back afterwards," said the S.M. So Dick wandered into Southampton to find the sights. A run over to the Ile of Wight and back, and the packet steamer brought the afternoon to a close.

Making his way to the station, Dick beheld a great military procession, and when it approached quite close he did not find from enquiries if it was the funeral of "his old pal, Don Southey. He did not dare to join the procession nor yet to see the S.M. at the station: so he got on the home-ward bound train and he is firmly convinced that the dead are more elusive than are the living.
SUB-BRANCH NOTES
DALWALLINU DISTRICT SUB-BRANCH.

This sub-branch although barely two
years of age has a wealth of achievements
to its credit which are far from being of
a parochial character. The residents of
the district would not think of holding any
function without using the local sub-
branch as the driving force—which of
course it is. Last year the Great
Hospital Gymkhana proved so successful
(£135 was raised for the local hospital)
that the branch decided to make it a yearly
event.

Mr. Fred. W. Bateson represented the
State Executive at the function which
can be best described by publishing his
report on his return. It reads:

"Under instructions from you I proceed-
to Dalwallin on Friday evening, Feb. 27.
I arrived there at 6 A.M. and was met by
Col. Fitzgerald, President of the Local
Sub-Branch. The occasion of this visit
being to represent the League at a func-
tion inaugurated by the Sub-Branch in
aid of the local hospital.

"The Sub-Branch with the aid of the res-
sidents of the district had set themselves
the task of raising £200 to finance their
Hospital for the ensuing year. Inciden-
tially this sub-branch saved that institution
last year—the effort on that occasion being
£135. Shortly after 1 p.m. a very large
programme of athletic motor and horse
racing, sports was launched and continued
until 6.30 p.m. The organisations being
practically perfect and not one set of
items clashed and keen competition was
the order of the day.

"Colonel Fitzgerald was the only dig-
ger horseman and he received an ovation
on his winning the three most important
races of the day. He came second in the
last race. In the evening a picture show
followed by a dance and distribution
of prizes. During the evening I had an op-
portunity of addressing the people and
assured them the League had encour-
ged its sub-branches to take an active
interest in the affairs of their districts.

"The effort of the sub-branch was a
very fine one and they deserve every
credit. They are the only organisation
in the district and judging by what pro-
minent people said to me they are likely
to remain so for a long time to come.
The prestige of the League there is no
doubt very high.

"On Sunday I was introduced to quite
a large number of diggers—nearly as
many as I had met on the Saturday—and
they all appear satisfied with their
holdings and their prospects. As far as
possible, I made inquiries and found that
there was only one digger who was not
doing well and it appears it is mostly
his own fault, but there is still every
chance for him to succeed.

"On Monday I was taken out by car
and visited some ten or twelve farms
belonging to diggers and ex-service men.
It is remarkable the area of country yet
to be fenced and the amount of valuable
feed lying idle therefrom. I am quite
satisfied this district will be carrying
large flocks of sheep in the near future.
The water question is about the biggest
they have—there are a number of wells,
the water being mostly stock water—and
a good few dams, these carrying the best
water. The land varies from heavy
loam to sand. and last year, being a pretty
dry one, the best results were from the
light lands. The stock were all in very
good condition and fed plentiful owing
to late rains.

"I left Dalwallin at 10.30 p.m. Mon-
day night and reached my home in time
for breakfast on Tuesday morning.

"In conclusion, I want to express my
thanks to the Dalwallin Sub-Branch for
the hospitality they accorded me, par-
ticularly to Mr. and Mrs. McCreadie,
the Town Clerk and Mrs. Dungey, and Col.
Fitzgerald; by their united efforts there
was not a dull moment for me.

"I must stress the fact that the Sub-
Branch is doing splendid work in this
district, and is solidly upholding the
prestige of the League."

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS
SUB-BRANCH.

The above branch held its annual pic-
nic at Point Walter on Saturday, 21st
February.

The launches "Valdana" and "Valda-
via" were chartered to convey picknickers
to and from the Point.

The children were catered for in the
way of fruit and ice cream in plenty and
races held during the afternoon resulted
in many of the little folk being pleased
with the prizes they won.

The adults held a six-event programme
which resulted as follows:

120 yards. Handicap (members only)—
1st. W. J. Lovell, trophy valued £2 2s.
2nd. O. Kirkby, trophy valued 10s. 6d.
75 yards. (Single Ladies)—1st. Miss
Ellis trophy valued £2 2s.; 2nd. Miss
Armfield, trophy valued 10s. 6d.; 3rd.
Miss M. Robinson, box of soap.

50 yards. (Married Ladies)—1st, Mrs.
Hughes, pair of shoes; 2nd, Mrs. Woods,
box of handkerchiefs; 3rd, Mrs. Oakley,
box of sewing lot; 4th, Mrs. V. Hunt,
75 yards. (Old Buffers Race)—1st, Mr.
J. Warne, trophy valued £1 5s.; 2nd, Mr.
A. Robinson, trophy valued 10s. 6d.; 3rd.
Mr. J. Wilson, box of soap.

Ladies Nail-driving—1st, Mrs. Miller,
6s. pair of shoes; 2nd, Mrs. Rowles,
7s. 6d. box of handkerchiefs; 3rd. Mrs.
Thompson, 8 s. flour sieves.

Potato Race—1st, W. C. Williams,
trophy valued £1 15s.; 2nd. R. Robinson,
box of soap.

President—Mr. J. Kane.
Secretary—Mr. E. J. Clay.
Hon. Treasurer—Mr. W. F. Langdon.
Handicapper and Starter—Mr. J. Warne.
Committees:

Adults—Messrs. Kane, Lovell, Mann
and Bailey.

Children's—Messrs. Connelly, Parker,
-Taylor and Langdon.

Everyone seemed to have thoroughly
enjoyed themselves and are now looking
forward to the next picnic of the branch.

MIDLAND DISTRICT SUB-BRANCH

Mr. F. W. Bateson recently submitted
his annual presidential report to members.
He states that in spite of the small in-
crease in membership, the Branch has
been particularly active. A Ladies' Auxi-
liary had been formed and numerous social
evenings were held throughout the year.

Upon the death of a local digger at
Wooroolo, the Branch rallied to the assist-
ance of his widow and children. A fund
was opened by the Ladies' Auxiliary, and
eventually a home was built by means of
a working bee on a lot of land owned by
the widow at Bassendean.

The dispute over the appointment of a
non-retired soldier as Town Clerk was
reviewed, culminating eventually in the
Assistant Town Clerk, who is a digger,
getting the appointment. Mr. Bateson
is gratified that two diggers were elected
on the new Town Council, and states that
the Branch can now with every confidence
look forward to a fair deal from the new
Mayor and Councillors. Mr. Bateson con-
cluded his thanking members for loyal
assistance and stated that as he believed
in changes of Leadership he would not
offer himself for re-election.

On the 5th March, the new President
(Mr. J. Hipping), presided over about 70
diggers at a smoke social held at the
Town Hall, the event being a decided
success. Several Sub-Branches were re-
presented, and the State Branch delega-
tion consisted of the State Secretary, Messrs.
G. H. Philp, and E. S. Watt.
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THE POST-BELLUM PLAGUE

It is said in Soldier Circles that a great number of cases of tuberculosis have been revealed lately. Most of these cases are unquestionably due to war service and probably the majority due to the slow acting germs deposited as a result of poisonous gases. There cannot have been many troops who saw service, especially on the Western Front, who did not breathe contaminated air on some occasion.

It would appear that one could be almost unaware of the pressure of some forms of gas which had been partially dispersed and yet in its diluted state a latent menace existed. Men who did not even experience the loss of speech which so frequently followed the inhalation of gasses, complain that now with the passing years they are growing "chesty."

It is a most difficult question to deal with and from reports received it would appear that when reasonable grounds exist for considering the disease connected with war service, the Repatriation Commission has been lenient in its finding and has given the soldiers the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases.

An old soldier with whom the writer saw service, who was as hard as nails and saw the whole thing through from Gallipoli to the Somme in 1918 with scarcely a blemish, is now lying with advanced consumption. In such a case a man may have been discharged from the army as fit and may have been repatriated to his civil avocation for some years without complaints. Then suddenly the dread disease, which has seemed to him to be something in the way of bronchial trouble or perhaps catarrh, has at length revealed itself in its true colours.

There is no medical history to support the complaint that he was gassed. His companions who could support the requisite evidence may not be procurable, and the whole business drifts down queer street. On the other hand there is always the possibility of contracting the complaint in the ordinary walks of civil life, and hence, the problem of determining the cause is particularly grave, as it would be equally unjust for the Commonwealth to have to foot the bill if the complaint was a natural disability, as it would be for the Government to deny the responsibility if the way was responsible.

These remarks are made, not with a view to the treating of panic, but rather to warn those diggers who were in "it" to take all possible precaution from possible infection, to advise them to become even fanatical about fresh air, and to suggest that they are not wholly unmindful of diet. Great things have been said of uncooked vegetables, such as celery, lettuce and such like, as the lime is easily assailable and is of the desired formation in these edibles.

It is particularly necessary that, we as a nation, should be virile as we have a great duty in ensuring the granting of the best shoots on this great stock Australia and every one of us should be mindful of our duty to posterity we have left to carry on this great heritage.

Special Notice to Diggers. At the Lyceum Theatre, Mount Lawley, on the 25th March, the 28th Battalion Association in running a monster vaudeville and picture entertainment.

The preliminary bombardment will be opened up by the young 28th band. At zero hour the programme will be commenced, the first being a unit of fine and talented artists who can be depended on to beat down all opposition in the way of blues. Having captured the hearts of the audience, the consolidating will take the form of a wonderful screen effort. A.M.S. Hutchinson’s famous "Clear Heart" (this author wrote "If Winter Comes") will be the principal feature. Motors, trams, trains and Shank’s pony will mop up a happy dispersing gathering after the stunt has been brought to a successful close.

Having tendered the world at large the treat of the season, the Association of 28’s will reward themselves by holding a Smoke Social at St George’s Hall on the evening of April 7th. The young 28th will cheer the arrival of the old 28th men and every 28 within the Metropolitan Area should roll up and help to make this function the successful affair it deserves to be.
Prohibition Referendum

POLLING DAY, APRIL 4th, 1925

PROHIBITION IS NOT PRACTICABLE

The Attorney-General of Great Britain said: "with such a being as man, in such a world as the present and with such a climate as ours, a policy of Prohibition is not practicable, even if it were desirable and to my mind it is not desirable, even if it were practicable."

PROHIBITION IS NOT THE STRIKING NOTE

The Earl of Balfour: "In England the individual is the striking note. We have to take very great care not to curtail the liberties of the individual, because the individual is the factor in tradition."

PROHIBITION IS ONLY PARTIAL IN EFFECT

General Sir R. Baden-Powell, Bt.: "Pledge-taking and Prohibition are only partial in their effects. Character is the best practical antidote to intemperance.

Therefore on Polling Day, Saturday, 4th April,

Vote AGAINST Prohibition thus:

BALLOT PAPER

DO YOU VOTE FOR PROHIBITION?  

Yes  

No  

Authorised by F. G. Stenberg, Forrest Chambers, Perth, for the Liquor Defence Association

Imperial Print, Perth
The League's Deputation to the Prime Minister

Representatives of the R.S.L., consisting of Messrs. H. S. Humphrey, J. Cornell, M.L.C., A. N. McDonald, H. Colvin, and E. S. Watt, waited on the Prime Minister on March 16th, and preferred a number of requests. Senator Pearce and Messrs. Gough, H. Government, and Mann, M's.H.R., were also present.

Mr. H. S. Humphrey asked for a continuance in this State of the employment grant, which with the present decreasing scale will cease in June next, and in support stated that the League's unemployment problems were not diminishing, due largely to the large number of British ex-service men in this State, who naturally come to the League for support and assistance. Mr. Humphrey also requested the Prime Minister to give preference of promotion to returned soldiers in the Federal Civil Service, and pointed out that as it is the Government's policy to give soldiers preference in appointments, to be consistent it should also give preference in promotion.

Mr. A. N. MacDonald stated the case for the soldier settlers, pointing out that unless many soldiers secured relief from the Government, in the interests of their capitalised properties, they would soon have to walk off their holdings, and swell the ranks of the unemployed. He stated that most of the cattle had gone, and only the best soldier, who was battling hard against odds, was left. The State Government would only grant these men relief if the Commonwealth would assist to bear the resultant loss. The speaker appealed to the Prime Minister to assist in this respect.

Mr. E. S. Watt expressed concern at the large number of ex-service men who were now "breaking up" as the result of the conditions of war service. General Ross, the Director of the Canadian Medical Services throughout the war, speaking in the Canadian House of Commons in 1922, said that during the next five or ten years there would be more war-caused disease than in the past, it not being a question of the duration of the disease, but of determining the conditions under which the men served. General Ross' prophecy was unfortunately being fulfilled, and as many of the victims were discharged with a clean sheet, the League was perturbed and looked for light in the report of the War Aggravation Commission.

Mr. Watt sought for information as to when the report would be available to the League. He also asked that in the event of the death or disablement of a man in receipt of a pension exceeding 50 per cent., which is granted for a war-disability involving an organic complaint, his death, owing to decreased resistance, set at an earlier stage, and the pension of his dependants be accordingly amended. The deputation also considered that the Re pensions Commission should grant pensions to a soldier pensioner's wife from the date of marriage, and to their children from date of birth, and that they had no authority in the act to pay only arrears of six months on belated applications greater than the amounts paid.

Mr. D. M. Benson requested that the Federal Government ask the State Government to appoint a returned soldier to the Workers' Home Board, which administers the War Service Homes Act in Western Australia. He claimed that in no other State was an Act specially created for returned soldiers administered by a civilian board. With the same authority administering two boards allowing advances of 2800 and 550 respectively there was a tendency to restrict the more liberal advance, soldiers thus having some difficulty in obtaining the amount necessary to their building requirements. A soldier would be more likely to require council accommodation than to an old comrade than in a civilian when in bad circumstances. Fees were charged the soldier for the inspection of property, but he was not advised of the result of such inspections in the event of a dispute between owner and contractor.

Mr. J. Cornell, M.L.C., summarised the requests of the deputation, laying particular stress upon the need for co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States in regard to land settlement.

THE PRIME MINISTER.

The Prime Minister, in his reply said the bulk of the questions were such that they should be dealt with by the returned ex-service men themselves. War service was the only effective way they were ever going to deal with them, although there were some which revealed the peculiar circumstances of the State. In regard to the Unemployment Grant, he would look into the matter and see whether they could in any way revise their action as far as this was concerned, because of the many circumstances peculiar to it. So far as Preference in Promotion in the Commonwealth public service was concerned, this was a matter of Australian wide application. Therefore, representation should be made through the Federal Executive to have the maximum effect. However, representation had been made, and he would have the matter looked into, and would discuss it with the Government and see whether they were prepared to take any action or not. In respect of Pensions and War Aggravation, a Royal Commission had been appointed, and submitted its report, which would be available any day. The questions was to ask considered were of the greatest importance, but he desired to clear up one, or two points that appeared to be misapprehended. There was no question as to whether consideration should be given to the soldier way of pension if subsequent to the war he fell into ill-health or was in any way incapacitated, provided that the cause of the ill-health or incapacity was, his war service. The Royal Commission was intended to consider whether the methods which were adopted at the present time to determine whether the present condition was due to aggravation of war service were fair and just methods from the point of view of the soldiers, before suggesting that because a soldier fell ill on ill-health some considerable period after the war was over that he should be precluded from receiving pension assistance. It was a question of determining what was a fair, just, and an equitable basis for arriving at the decision whether the position was due to war service or not, General Howse, who was now in the Government, held a similar position to General Howse, who would give the soldier, fair, and not less than the amount asked. The Prime Minister said, "It was extremely probable that he would continue to administer it, but, to a great extent, it was simply a matter of a more or less medical question. He was sure there were none of them who knew General Howse who did not appreciate that no one in Australia had more sympathy with the soldier than had the general. He (Mr. Bruce) did not think there was anything which could be said on that question until such time as this report was available to the public, and until General Howse had had an opportunity of being in control of the department for some time and investigating its methods. In regard to soldier representation on the War Service Homes Board, he would discuss that with the Minister responsible as soon as he got back to Melbourne. He remembered their previous representations on the subject when he suggested that the States should be approached. The deputation said they had done that, and had got to a certain position. He would review the position and see whether there was any action which they considered they should take. The Commonwealth Government had done its best in respect to war service homes. They did for a period build in many States, but the scheme did not prove to be an absolute success. (Laughter). They then took steps by which the State Savings Banks or some authority in the State were carrying work out for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Bruce said it was a matter of seeing in the general administration that the State had been directed towards the soldier. Because there were to have been some unsympathetic administration in the past was no reason for condemning the system. On that point he would leave it to the Minister for Works and Railways and the League to know what decision they came to. The
major question of all, although the health one was important enough, was that of Soldier Land Settlement.

It was necessary that there should be some clear thinking on this question or they would never arrive at the permanent basis which had been referred to. The history of soldier land settlement required looking at. The Commonwealth had no land in Australia, other than the Federal Territory and the Northern Territory. The land was owned by the States, and when it came to a question of soldier land settlement the States took the view that they would not have the Commonwealth coming in and really stepping over the State authorities. The position also was that the Commonwealth had no Crown lands. The State was obviously the most suitable authority to carry out land settlement. Therefore land settlement had been carried on in all States by the State Government. The Commonwealth met the State Governments as a whole in conference. The whole question was discussed as to the basis upon which the work should be carried out by the State, and the Commonwealth Government undertook to find the necessary money for settlement, by the raising of loans. The Commonwealth undertook to pay half of the interest for a period of five years on the money employed for soldier settlement. Those agreements entered into were done so quite voluntarily and represented a contract between the Commonwealth Government and the States. In the working out of the soldier settlement scheme unquestionably many mistakes had been made by the States, who were doing the work. Land had been bought at too high a price. In addition to that there had been the fact that many things which were not realized and understood in this work were undertaken by the States. In most of the States a position had arisen where the necessity was recognized of something being done to put this whole question of soldier settlement on a proper basis, and to ensure a fair and reasonable opportunity for the soldier to succeed. In order to do that all the States realized that it was going to mean facing a very considerable loss. This would mean a big burden to them. It was certainly a burden they did not contemplate when they undertook to do the work for the Commonwealth. The States said "We think the Commonwealth ought to give us some assistance." The Commonwealth had no desire to act hardly by the States. The Commonwealth was open to consider this question with reason. There was evidence in regard to this by the attitude adopted at the Premiers' Conference in 1923. It was not the Commonwealth's fault that this situation had arisen. While being sympathetic with the States and being perfectly prepared to consider the matter with them and see if there was a fair basis on which they might give some assistance to the States in their difficulties, they certainly did not act contrary to any State's suggestion that it was the Commonwealth's fault that the present position had arisen. It was nothing of the sort. What they had to do was to consider where the scheme stood to-day.

They were prepared to consider the circumstances of the State with a view to granting a measure of assistance which would ensure soldier settlement being put on a proper basis throughout Australia. It was quite impossible for them to consider the problem unless all the States knew exactly where they were, and could say what was necessary to be done, what the problem meant, how much it would cost, and what share of the burden they were prepared to carry. The Commonwealth Government did not know the position at present, and would certainly have to have all facts before them before the question could be dealt with. At the present moment the States had not all grappled with their problems. They did not know exactly where they were and what was necessary to be done. If the Commonwealth made new arrangements with the States it could not be done piecemeal. There had to be one broad define settlement for the whole of Australia. Meanwhile the unfortunate soldier on the land who probably had just made which deserved remedy, had to live. He would say without hesititation there was only one thing which could be done. He would tell the States that the Commonwealth was prepared to consider the problem with them. Until such time as that came about it was impossible to talk of isolated cases. Nevertheless, the soldiers should not be made to suffer. Each of the States must take whatever temporary measures were necessary in order to ensure fair treatment of the soldier. The whole of their actions could be taken into account when they came to a final settlement, but he put it to them that this problem was one which it was about time there was some clear thinking and a little appreciation of where they stood. There was no way out, other than that the States should all grapple with the problem, see where they stood and then come to the Commonwealth Government and have the matter thrashed out so that a new agreement could be made in which the Commonwealth Government was prepared to act fairly and justly by the States.

THE GREAT GAME.
A street bookie was arrested and hailed before the magistrate, who looked at the prisoner very shrewdly and said: "Have I not seen you here before on the same charge two weeks ago?" "No, sir," said the bookie, "it couldn't have been me. I was in the army then." "Ah," said the magistrate, "you were playing a nobler game then, were you?" "Yes, sir," said the excited prisoner. "Crown and Anchor, sir."
EDUCATION OF BLINDED SOLDIERS' CHILDREN

Representations were made to the Minister in Charge of Repatriation that children of blinded soldiers should receive benefits under the Soldiers' Children's Education Scheme, in the same manner as children of deceased or totally and permanently incapacitated soldiers are now eligible.

A reply has been received from the Minister in charge of Repatriation stating that he has conferred with the Repatriation Commission regarding the question of the acceptance of blinded ex-members of the Forces as totally and permanently incapacitated soldiers, specially in relation to the Soldiers' Children Education Scheme. The views of the Commission, with which

RETURNED SOLDIERS' MONUMENTAL WORKS.

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the Minister states he concurs, are that the request cannot be granted, and stating, as the League will recognise, this decision was given, not on account of any unsympathetic attitude as stated in press cutting, but because, while the extreme seriousness of the deprivation suffered by the blinded soldier is realised, it is not possible to regard him as in the same category as the totally and permanently incapacitated soldier for whose children provision is made under the scheme.

As the League is aware, points out the Minister, the cases known as "totally and permanently incapacitated" are men whose war disabilities have reduced them to a state of extreme helplessness, both in regard to health and earning power, or to quote the words of the Act are "incapacitated for life to such an extent as to be precluded from other than a negligible percentage of a living wage." That there has been no lack of sympathy on the part of the Commonwealth towards the blinded soldier, is shown by the fact that the highest rate of pension, viz., 28 per fortnight, is paid irrespective of any amount that he may be in a position to earn either at his pre-war occupation or as the result of special training for a new occupation or in any business that he may, find congenial and practicable. No doubt a number of cases will occur which the aggregate income of a blinded soldier or of a blinded soldier with his wife and family, as the case may be, together with earnings is of a very substantial amount.

This fact is not mentioned by the Minister in any way unsympathetically, but merely as showing the difference between

Commonwealth 6 per cent. Loan for States

£5,400,000

Interest 6 per cent. 
Price of Issue £99

The Loan is being raised by the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. The cash proceeds of the Loan will be handed over by the Commonwealth to the States concerned for redemption of State Loans. The Loan will be repaid in 1930 or 1935, at the option of the subscriber, to be exercised when making application.

Application for the Loan, also the Deposits and Instalments of the Loan, may be lodged at any Bank or State Savings Bank; at any Money Order Post Office, or with any Member of a recognised Stock Exchange. Instalments will be payable as follows:—25 per cent, deposit to be lodged with application; 25 per cent. on Friday, 1st May, 1925, and 49 per cent. on Monday, 1st June, 1925. All the instalments may be prepaid if desired.

Interest is free of State Income Tax.

Interest commences from the date of lodgment of money where full subscription paid up at time of application.

CONVERSION PRIVILEGES.

Holders of Victorian, South Australian, Western Australian, and Tasmanian State securities maturing on or before 30th June, 1925, are invited to convert their holdings, or any part thereof, in multiples of £10, into an equal amount of 6 per cent. Commonwealth Stock or Bonds of this Loan.

Persons who so convert their State securities will receive from the Commonwealth on 15th May, 1925, a cash bonus of £1 for each £100 of State securities converted.

Commonwealth Treasury,
Melbourne.

S. M. BRUCE,
 Acting Treasurer.

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Ladies' Panamas, Leghorns, Straws, etc., for 2/6.

GOOD COMPANY.

The Colonel had engaged Captain Jack to ride his horse in a race at the Divisional Races. After the horse had won the Colonel's wife was so pleased that she sent an invitation to the Captain. "Mrs. — requests the pleasure of Captain Jack's company at dinner." The reply came: "Except for three men sick and two on leave, Captain Jack's company have much pleasure in accepting."
PALESTINE in MARCH 1917

(A Review of Operations in the First Attack on Gaza)

It is always interesting to review the movements of the troops during the calendar month through which we are passing, and we propose to recall to mind some of the experiences of the A.I.F. serving with the Egyptian forces during March, 1917.

Early in the month the Eastern Force, under Lieut. General Sir Charles Dobell, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., was concentrated at El Arish. The Desert Column, with Lieut. General Sir P. Chetwode, Bt., K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., in charge had its headquarters at Sheikh Zowaid. The movements here in advance covering the construction of railway communication, which was being laid towards Rafa. The Turks had been working hard on the defences of Wadi Sheikh Nuran, and on the 5th March, aeroplane reconnaissance established the fact that Jacko had funkled the Allenby approach and was evacuating this strong position. The Eastern Force was set in motion to prevent the evacuation or to inflict loss on the enemy during its execution. The Royal Flying Corps was most successful in its bombing manoeuvres, particularly at Bir Saba, Tel el Sheria, and the junction station on the Jerusalem-Ramlah line. It was however found impossible for the ground forces to make any effective move against the enemy, owing to the great distance between the railhead at Wadi Sheikh Nuran. The enemy retired to two positions, Gaza and Tel el Sheria, leaving a small garrison at Bir Saba.

The new position required new planes; as to attempt the Bir Saba position would elongate the front, whereas the true line of advance should be along the coast, where the lines of communication were easily protected. The coastal district was, of course, better equipped in every way; more liberal water supplies were obtainable and construction of railway more rapid. Hence this line of advance was continued, the object being to move the troops forward as far as the communications could supply them. Most important was the increasing of the radius and mobility of the striking force.

At about the middle of March there were distinct indications that the enemy intended to withdraw his troops from Gaza—Tel el Sheria—Bir Saba line without fight, a move it was highly important to frustrate: also it was necessary to seize the line of Wadi Ghuzze to protect the advance of the railway from Rafa towards Gaza.

General Dobell moved his Desert Column from Sheikh Zowaid and approached the outskirts of Gaza. The whole of the Desert Column was concentrated at Deir el Belah, the 54th Division at In Seirat under the hills east of Deir el Belah, the 52nd Division at Khan Yunus and the Camel Corps with armoured batteries about Abasan el Kebir.

The enemy's strength here appeared to be between two and three divisions. The Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division left its bivouac at 2.30 a.m. on the 20th March and crossed Wadi Ghuzze close followed by the Imperial Mounted Division.

The moves of these divisions were delayed considerably by the dense fog which came just before dawn and did not lift until 8 a.m. The Imperial Camel Corps had as its role to assist the Imperial Mounted Division. At 9.30 a.m. the Anzacs reached Beit Dejids and pushed detachments out west, north and east. The right of the 2nd Australian Light Horse rested on the sea. A detachment of these troops captured the Commander of the 53rd Turkish Division with his staff, while he was driving into Gaza; also a convoy of 30 Turks. Late in the morning a detachment destroyed the head of a Turkish column with machine-gun fire as it debouched from Gaza in a north-easterly direction. The engagements lasted throughout the day, and a few casualties were inflicted by the heavy 'enemy guns at Heceira.

At about 1 p.m. the Anzacs, under Major General Sir H. G. Chauvel, K.C.M.G., C.B., G.O.C. the Australian and New Zealand mounted divisions were instructed to press forward against the north and north-east of Gaza to assist the infantry there and to watch the enemy movements.

Portions of the enemy positions were already in our hands and at about 4 p.m. Ali Munarr Hill, known as the Labyrinth, fell to these forces, and by 5 p.m. the enemy was holding out in trenches on the Mosque only. The 54th Division acted in concert and under General Chauvel's direction, responded gallantly in the face of heavy fire. Certain losses were sustained in positions held by the troops which had relieved the Anzacs and General Chauvel detached the 3rd Light Horse to remedy the position. This unit succeeded in dislodging the enemy from the different posts held and was greatly admired for its daring. The official reports reiterate the splendid dash and gallantry of our Anzacs.

The New Zealand Mounted Rifles captured two 77 m.m. guns which they used with much skill on the enemy, and as a result 20 prisoners were taken. The winning up of the G.O.C. of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Sir Archibald Murray, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., runs:—"The Australian Light Horse, under the command of Brigadier General G. de L. Ryrke C.M.G., participated in the successful operations in this phase of the operations.

The total result of this first battle of Gaza, gave us 950 Turkish and German prisoners, 52 Austrian field guns and caused estimated losses in the enemy of 8,000, and cost us under 4,000 casualties, most of whom were only slightly wounded."
The Imperial Camel Corps, manned by Australian, New Zealand, and British personnel proved a "corps d'elite," possessing quite a remarkable spirit of gallantry," says General Sir Archibald Murray in the course of his despatch.  

A BRAVE PADRE.

"Wager" writes asking if this journal or any of its readers knows if an army chaplain has won the V.C. There may have been others, but we have a record of one brave padre who won the coveted decoration: he is the Rev. Theodore Bayley Hardy, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., who was attached to an English regiment. The official record reads: "For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on many occasions. Although over fifty years of age, he has, by his fearlessness, devotion to men of his battalion, and quiet, unobtrusive manner, won the respect and admiration of the whole division. His marvellous energy and endurance would be remarkable even in a very much younger man, and his valour and devotion are exemplified in the following incidents:—An infantry patrol had gone out to attack a previously located enemy post in the ruins of a village, the Reverend Theodore Bayley Hardy (C.F.) being then an company headquarters. Hearing firing, he followed the patrol, and about four hundred yards beyond our front line of posts found an officer of the patrol dangerously wounded. He remained with the officer until he was able to get assistance to bring him in. During this time there was a great deal of firing, and an enemy patrol actually penetrated between the spot at which the officer was lying and our front line and captured three of our men. On a second occasion, when an enemy shell exploded in the middle of one of our posts, the Reverend T. B. Hardy at once made his way to the spot, despite the shelling and trench mortar fire which was going on at the time, and set to work to extricate the buried men. He succeeded in getting out one man who had been completely buried. He then set to work to extricate a second man, who was found to be dead. During the week of the time that he was digging out the men this chaplain was in great danger, not only from shell fire, but also because of the dangerous condition of the wall of the building which had been hit by the shell which buried the men. On a third occasion he displayed the greatest devotion to duty when, with our infantry, after a successful attack, were gradually forced back to their starting trench. After it was believed that all our men had withdrawn from the wood, Chaplain Hardy came out of it, and on reaching an advanced post asked the men to help him to get in a wounded man. Accompanied by a sergeant, he made his way to the spot where the man lay, within ten yards of a pill-box which had been captured in the morning. He was subsequently recaptured and occupied by the enemy. The wounded man was too weak to stand, but between them the chaplain and the sergeant eventually succeeded in getting him to our lines. Throughout the day the enemy's artillery, machine-gun, and trench mortar fire was continuous, and caused many casualties. Notwithstanding, this very gallant chaplain was seen moving quietly amongst the men and tending the wounded, absolutely regardless of his personal safety."

BEFORE THE ARMISTICE

Do you recall that famous charge,  
By gallant horsemen,  
Courage which wonder could not enlarge,  
That deed which cannot fade?  
Six hundred mounted men there were,  
'Twas but a few returned!  
And was it not through lack of care  
That this sad fate they earned?  
But brave as was the "Light Brigade,"  
And wrong as the command  
In this stern war are deeds as brave,  
Orders as out of hand:  
Men still may find a soldier's grave  
Because some fool misplanned.

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PERSONALITIES

Executive, delegate C. J. Cooke is almost as well known in the capital as the new G.P.O. and his many friends will be pleased to know of his appointment to the responsible position of factory inspector.

It is pleasing to chronicle that a prominent League in Mr. A. Yeates of Upper Swan has been elected by the growers in this State to represent them on the Federal Dried Fruits Control Board. It is anticipated that this Board will be in a position to effect much needed improvement in the marketing abroad of Australian currants, sultanas and lemons. Mr. Yeates was born in Kent, England 50 years ago and has had an adventurous existence. At 17 years of age he joined the British Army and served for several years on the north-west frontier of India. At the outbreak of the South African War Mr. Yeates was in the thick of it but during its progress he was sent away with his unit to China to assist in quelling the Boxer rebellion. In 1912 Mr. Yeates came to this State where he took up land at Millendon. He served in France and Belgium during the war, being badly wounded at Villers-Bretonneux. Since returning Mr. Yeates has occupied many honorary public positions including membership of the Swan Road Board, the State Fruitgrower’s Advisory Board and president for 43 years of the Upper Swan sub-branch of the League. He represented this State at the Federal Fruit Conference held in May last in Melbourne. We heartily congratulate this good digger on his appointment.

Alex Drysdale of Bassendean is one of the old fashioned citizens who still think that nothing is too good for the digger who suffered and risked so much during the 1914-18 picnic period—and he acts on that thought.

In our last issue we remarked on the kindness of Mr. J. Newson, of the Land Titles, in presenting pictures to diggers in the various institutions. The generous donor’s name was misspelt and should have read Mr. J. Newson.

The Country Fruit Distribution, with Digger E. G. Williams (late 28th Battn.) at its head, has sixteen employees who are giving good and efficient services. This is best explained by stating that the whole sixteen are diggers. Good luck to you, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Carl Ferguson, who for years has been senior clerk in the State Executive Office, has been appointed by the State Executive to the new position of Assistant State Secretary—an appointment highly merited.

Mr. A. H. Morrell, the capable Secretary of the West Perth Sub-Branch and Digger Trustee, is leaving shortly on a well-earned trip to England and the Continent. Prior to his departure, his Sub-Branch is holding a smoke social in his honour at St. George’s Hall, on Tuesday, 31st March next.

League members generally sympathise with Councillor Jack Wilson, of Fremantle, in the loss of his son as the result of a motor accident. Mr. Wilson is a prominent member of the Fremantle Sub-Branch, and sat on the State Executive for two years.

H. T. Crane, late 32nd Batt., is standing for re-election as a candidate for Inglewood (late Maylands) Ward at the elections being held next month for the Perth Road Board. Mr. Crane has done splendid work for returned soldiers during his previous term of office on the Board, and soldiers should support those who work for them. He was the only digger representative on the old Board, and so far is the only digger nominee, and it is up to the war veterans in his Ward to rally round and give him all the help they can.

Elsie ‘Aussie Girl’ Brickell has returned to this State after a twelve months’ sojourn in the Harbour City. Miss Elsie, who has cheered the heart of many a suffering digger in the soldier institutions, both here and in Sydney, thinks that for wealth of achievement, and warmth of fellowship feeling, our own State Branch of the League is on its own. Perhaps Miss Brickell will resuscitate the activities of the Not Forgotten League, of which she was the Secretary.

GOOD ON YOU, STANLEY MELBOURNE BRUCE.

Mr. Bruce’s speech at the State President’s dinner in the Soldiers’ Institute, in which he criticised the State Cabinet for its ban on addresses to State School children on Anzac Day, was a wonderful oration. When he sat down the entire company spontaneously rose from their seats and cheered their digger Prime Minister to the echo.

How the years work their changes! Until a month or two ago the Irish ex-service men had separate organisations in both North and South Ireland. Recently a request was made to the British Legion by both organisations to be admitted into the Legion as areas under the constitution, which request was gladly accepted. A famous Irishman described the event as “the best thing that has happened to Ireland for many a day.”

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VARIATION

Reggio—Good news at last for us stumps! The Artificial Limb Factory, which is an auxiliary to the Repatriation Department, is now housed at the Department's buildings, which is what would have been a good move five years ago; but it is none the less a blessing now. One can now see the Medical Officer, the satellites of his branch and can invoke the aid of the artisans at the Factory, all without travelling across Perth.

R.S.L.—"Camelo" is welcome to his opinion of the Gyppo and may abuse them to his pen's content; yet because I disapprove of the language he employs and because I do not share his want of brotherly feeling for all God's human creatures, I do not think he has occasion to wax personal. "Camelo" may be one of many who encountered the Egyptians during war time, when they like ourselves, displayed abnormalities, but I have known him in peace time and years before the war as well as in the war period—hence I cannot agree with his caustic criticisms.

R.S.L.—How goes the antics of the jugglers about the mental house? The segregation has already done much good at Claremont. When is the next improvement to be effected? It is high time the jugglers were decently housed at West Subiaco and I sincerely hope those who have interested themselves in the jugglers' fight for humane treatment will take up the cudgels on behalf of the unfortunate civil inmates, many of whom would be useful citizens if given scientific treatment in congenial environs.

Hey!—I don't want to start a controversy, but I would like to know what was the worst stunt of the war. The absolute unqualified worst engagement in which the Aussies took part. The old Gallipoli diggers argue that the landing stands alone, next in popular favour as worst comes (I am speaking of the events in chronological sequence) Pösen, then Lagnicourt, Paschendale and finally Villers Bretonneaux, my tip goes to the Flanders battles in the Autumn of 1917, to wit, Paschendale.

Spot.—At the recent Soldiers' Settlers Conference the "wheat kings" were made a target for many a sly shaft aimed by the "downtrodden spud diggers," the "starving cow cookies" and the "poverty-stricken fruit growers." It is amusing to recall that a certain "wheat king" who indignantly denied the change of affluence laid against his section of the settlers, spent portion of his holiday in clinching the purchase of an expensive new motor car.

Lance Bateman.—The only fault I find with "Camelo's" trenchant criticism of the "Gyppo" is with his language—it's too mild. (Spare us!—Ed.) The only way to curry favour with the (censored.—Ed.) is to hit them hard and often with a spiked club. To be reasonable and just with them is to be considered a weakling to be used as a door mat. They fear and respect force. For instance, an educated Egyptian said to me just after the native rising in 1919, "the British soldiers are mad, but you Australians are worse, because you are only half mad." When pressed for his reasoning he informed me that when the English soldiers encountered a mob of rioters they fired over their heads but the "half-mad" Australian fired straight at them. The "Gyppo" has a wonderful respect for the Australian.

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PENSIONS.

The last Federal Congress protested against the large number of reductions in pensions reported to have been recently effected in Western Australia, and requested a full enquiry regarding the contributory cause thereof. This resolution was brought under the notice of the Minister in charge of Repatriation by the Federal Secretary, who has now been informed by the Minister that as a result of a thorough enquiry into the matter, it is considered that the protest of Congress against the large number of reductions in pensions reported to have been recently effected in Western Australia is not justified.

On receipt of the League’s letter conveying the resolution in question, the matter was gone into by the Repatriation Commission, which considered that it was not at all likely that either the State Board or any officer would so far misjudge the intentions and policy of the Commission as to reduce pensions below the actual and fair assessment of the disability of the ex-soldier concerned. It was thought desirable, however, to ask for a full report on the matter after full investigation and enquiry. This has now come to hand, states the Minister.

A view of the position in Western Australia reveals that the number of reductions effected during 1924 was considerably less than in the previous years. The annual statistics, moreover, show that at the close of the financial year 1923-24, the average fortnightly rate of pension in that State for incapacitated soldiers had increased to 34/9 as compared with 34/7 as at June, 1923, and 34/- as at June, 1922.

As assurance has been received from the Departmental Medical Officer in the state concerned that the policy of the Commission in addressing each man fairly in accordance with the estimated degree of his war disability has been consistently aimed at, and the suggestion of any effort being to effect a general reduction in war pensions is emphatically denied.

The Minister adds that it is the intention both of the Government and of the Commission to maintain the spirit of the Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Department and any action tending to depart from that purpose will not be countenanced.

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Here at home we are never far from these things, and we have evidence upon evidence of the present Government of Western Australia practising these self-same doctrines. The soldiers of W.A. have, generally speaking, sought to install a love of Empire and a veneration of Australia in the hearts of the younger people. They obtained concessions from the Mitchell Government which helped them to this end, they were always treated with respect due to the representative body of men, who saved their country, but now things are different.

We remember the Mitchell Government accepting an agreement to liberate our mental comrade from conditions which were calculated to retard their progress. We also remember the repudiation of that agreement by an authority other than the Government named.

We find the League proposing a change of personnel in the Board administering the War Service Homes’ Act in this State. The proposal was backed up by logical principles, and was desirable in the interests of the prospective clients of the Department. The reply of the Government has already been described as “unsympathetically brief.” There was no serious departure for the Government, it merely had to exchange two positions in its civil service, and thus provide for a returned civil servant on the Board. Further evidence of the Governing Body’s attitude may be seen by the withdrawal of travelling facilities on Anzac Day. Every question which crops up is either a Federal responsibility, or the responsible Minister evades the deputations arranged.

The State called for an enquiry on Federal Administration, and many prominent men talk secession, yet every chance the local Government has of throwing the onus of a matter on to the shoulders of the Commonwealth, it does so.

In regard to the appointment of a non-returning man to the position of caretaker of the Kalgooorie School, when there were many candidates perfectly efficient who were returned men—we will not go further in the comparison; for we respect the civilians’ status always—we have already noted the result of correspondence with the Education Department and now we have to report the refusal of the Acting Premier to receive a deputation on a matter of such a vital nature as Preference to Soldiers.

Fortunately the League is strong, and we have much evidence that the diggers are coming together more than hitherto, so that we may face the problems with some sense of security. We have in our ranks many adherents to the persuasion of the present Government, we have men who are sincere unionists: in fact, sub-branches of them; but all of them are disgusted with the course adopted by the Government. Knowing neither party or creed, I do not hesitate to say, from the purely national point of view, that this treatment of the soldiers will have far-reaching effects. It is not empty prophecy or a want of visionary to foresee the inevitable. In the first place, such actions are apt to be a boomerang course. They damage all with whom they come in contact—in this case they damn patriotism to the deepest depths of the inferno, and continuing in their orbit they recoil on their authors. Thus shall we see the rising generation listless and unready in its inevitable hour of need, and we shall see the awakening of the electors. We are reminded of Rudyard Kipling’s “Lama,” speaking to Kim, he referred to the stone thoughtlessly thrown into the water, ting upon ring swelled on the broken surface, each larger than the former. So the careless words or actions injure little at first, and increasing seriously, have far-reaching results.

The people of Australia are not entirely forgetful, nor are they unmindful of the debt of gratitude they owe to the A.I.F. It is obvious therefore that the present Government’s opposition is proof that the reflex of the people’s views is not displayed by the Government, and therefore it is dangerous for it to delay in changing its tactics.
THE LISTENING POST.

MARCH 20th, 1925.

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