

AEWS CHANGE-OVER

To Become Technical Correspondence School

WHEN servicemen overseas or at home wanted to learn something about accounting, bee-keeping, or how to work a diesel engine, when servicewomen felt the urge to learn leatherwork, or embroidery, they simply enrolled with the AEWS. They joined the study course section and turned their spare-time to their own profit. In New Zealand and the Pacific there were between 12,000 and

Actually, the dissolving of the section simply means its reconstitution as a technical correspondence school.

Nearly all the members of the present staff—it has gradually become smaller—will return to their civilian jobs, mainly school-teaching, but the officer in charge, Major John Nicol, will carry on with the work he started three-and-half years ago.

The study course group meant much to members of the Forces in Italy, Egypt and Japan. Its job is by no means over yet. It works now for the J Force and the interim Army, Navy and Air Force. But in Japan it is known more familiarly as the ERS, or Education and Rehabilitation Service, with the accent on education rather than rehabilitation.

All Things for All Men

Major Nicol told *The Listener* in an interview that the field of work covered by these Army courses has included the study of agriculture and livestock, and of trades such as electrical work, carpentry, motor and radio engineering, commercial subjects and some researches into forestry and biology. It has also taught the rudiments of music.

Scores of the booklets used were written by experts in New Zealand; only one, a treatise on shorthand, was procured from overseas. And each book contains exercises which mean, at the end of the course, examinations, and a certificate of success—at any rate, examinations!

Catering for Practical Pupils

"Our aim has been, and is, to cater for the practical man; the academic student is looked after by another section," said Major Nicol. "The Wellington Technical College started this kind of work in 1938 on a smaller scale and greatly helped the AEWS in starting."

He is indebted, Major Nicol says, to the many authors of course booklets. Some of them did the work without any payment, looking on it as a war job. All co-operated very readily and, without them, the scheme would not have worked.

Among the books are two on conversational German and Italian, provided for the use of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. in Europe. If Private Smith wanted to see Fraulein Muller home, he looked up Page 22 and said, with the aid of the section on pronunciation, "Darf ich Sie nach Hause begleiten?" If Corporal Brown's thirst was insupportable at any time in Italy, he turned to Page 11 in the Italian book, and called for "La birra." (For such social give-and-take in Japan, they will have the help of another simple phrase-book, produced this time by the British Commonwealth Occupation Force authorities). In all, there are 130,000 booklets the AEWS store, but the coverage of subjects is still considered to be incomplete.

"So you see," said Major Nicol, "the war has brought us at least one educational service which would not have been so largely developed in peace time."



MAJOR JOHN NICOL

"The job is by no means over yet"

14,000 students; in Italy the numbers rose to an even higher figure. To-day there are still about 1,800 active students in New Zealand and nearly 2,000 in Japan.

Now the study course branch is being changed over to a civilian basis. The Education Department will staff it and run it, catering for civilian as well as service and ex-service men and women.

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suggested that it should approach the problem by the method it is now adopting, after hearing of a small village in the South Island where a women's organisation had made arrangements for a room, a piano, and lodgings, and made it practicable and economical for a teacher to visit the district.

Mr. Young told us that through his work in the schools broadcasts he is often reminded of the desperate situation in remote districts of children who need music lessons. "I get dozens of letters, and some of them are quite pathetic," he told us. "It's quite obvious that there are not enough opportunities for country children at present, but we feel that the necessary action must come from the people themselves—we can make suggestions, but the practical arrangements must be made by the existing organisations that have been formed as a direct result of the people's own enthusiasm."

Wherever she goes



Matchless

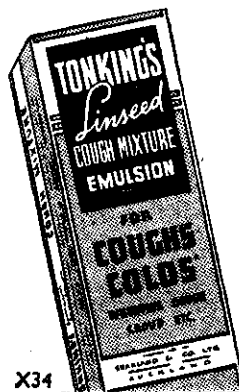


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