

REHABILITATION PROBLEMS

Australian Officials Study N.Z. System

REGINALD MARSH, who as Controller of Rehabilitation in the Commonwealth Employment Service is one of the Australian delegation of five which has been touring New Zealand to study our rehabilitation scheme, thinks we have a great country. He has been heard to confess a preference for Wellington Harbour over Sydney, is full of admiration for the men whose rehabilitation he has been studying, is astonished (as a one-time farmer) at our lambing percentages, and says he had to come to New Zealand to appreciate "the two best-known lines of our Banjo Paterson."

And he sees the vision splendid
Of the sunlit plain extended
which came to his mind when he drove over the hill from Governor's Bay to Christchurch in the early morning and saw the Canterbury Plains for the first time.

Before the war Mr. Marsh was a schoolteacher, running a mixed farm as well, and he was thinking of dropping

the teaching when the war broke out. He joined the R.A.A.F. as a wireless air operator. After some changes, he became one of the original officers of an R.A.A.F. Rehabilitation Section, inaugurated in 1941, which laid the foundations of Air Force demobilisation planning. He left the Air Force to take his present position, and in June of last year he was seconded to the Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction as Executive Officer of the Central Demobilisation Committee responsible for planning the demobilisation dispersal centres through which men of all services passed on their way out of the Forces.

As one of the R.A.A.F. Rehabilitation Section and as Air Force Member of the Inter-Services Demobilisation, Planning Committee, Mr. Marsh studied what was being done in Canada, England and the United States, and he interviewed Australian airmen "from Jerusalem to Western Canada," to help take a census of the whole personnel—to find how many would need training on their release, and what kind, how many would want houses, how many

would want flats, how many would want to go on the land, and so on; and to discover how these different sections were distributed in their home districts in Australia, so that the best locations for certain training centres could be determined.

Happy Coincidence

"That work was extraordinarily interesting," he told *The Listener*. "In the final result we were able to see how the men's education and their previous employment were related to each other, how their post-war intentions tallied with their previous experience, and all kind of things. It was amazing how many wanted to use their deferred pay as a deposit on a house.

"And we were able to estimate roughly, from Air Force figures, how many men, apparently qualified to do so, wanted to go on the land afterwards. We found that the number of men from all Forces who on their own evidence were experienced in farming, came to



REGINALD MARSH
Half a million demobilised

55,000. And the Rural Industries Commission, acting independently on evidence it collected for itself, estimated that there was room in Australia for 54,000 men to go on the land. That was an interesting coincidence of figures.

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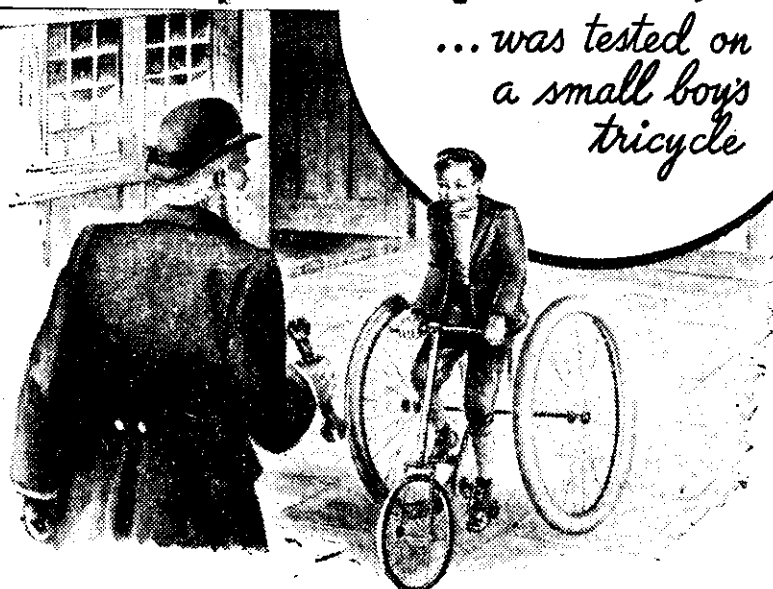
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