

“We thank you for the opportunity which you offered us in November, 1915, to assist in the manufacture of shells, but considering the present conditions we cannot see that any useful purpose would be served by our taking further steps towards the establishment of a central factory until we can be assured by you that the troubles now existing are overcome, etc.

“And the course which we have indicated seems to us to be the only one open, but shall be pleased to hear from you when you have anything definite to communicate.”

Had the efforts put forward in the United Kingdom and America not quite overcome the shortage of war material, there is no doubt but that munitions in Australia would have become an established fact; but it is now history that not only was the leeway made up, but a surplus stock of all munitions, etc., was really available.

REPATRIATION.

From many and varied sources during the last period of the War, discussion was rife among the many branches of the engineering and other professions as to the best means for placing the younger men returning from the front.

It was obvious that owing to the youth of the great proportion of our men that their careers would either be seriously interfered with or in many cases receive a direct check. It was necessary that suitable means should be provided, and that very quickly, whereby these young fellows would be guided and directed into channels of employment most suitable to their individual capacities.

A letter received by the then President, Mr. D. F. J. Harricks, from that earnest worker, Mr. C. A. Le Maistre Walker, reading as follows:—

Dalton House,
115 Pitt Street,
Sydney,
13th May, 1918.

Dear Mr. Harricks:

I take the liberty of enclosing herewith a suggestion of mine which was published in the "SUN" on the 27th ult.

I understand that the various branches of the Engineering profession are having a big Conference during the week on the question of amalgamating the various sections of the profession and I would be obliged if you would bring this before the Conference with a view to:—

1. Adopting the idea generally, viz., that all trades and professions should be available for service (which I am sure you would be in accord with), and

2. If the Conference approved—passing a Resolution supporting the proposal and offering the services of the profession in an advisory capacity wherever such services could be of use to the Department of Defence.

Of course, I do not mean to assume that the services of the profession in their professional capacity should be got at for the purpose of giving them honorarily, but on the question of repatriation—which is a very big question, probably the biggest we have to deal with in connection with the War—there are many of us who would voluntarily give our services on Advisory Committees, provided the opportunity were given. This is what I want the Government to do. I should be glad to give a short outline of the proposal at the Conference if they wished it, say, ten minutes or so, but that, of course, I leave to you.

Mr. Julius asked me to send this along to you, as he said he felt sure you were interested.

Apologising for taking up your valuable time,
I am,

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) C. A. Le M. Walker.

Following upon the receipt of the above, Mr. Harricks thought it was an opportune time to inform the various Institutions as to the views held by the Association in this regard, seeing that a resolution of delegates of the Australian Institutions passed a resolution "That they were in entire sympathy with Mr. Walker's proposal, and that they will recommend to the Association which they respectively

represent that such Associations place the services of their members (in Australia) at the disposal of the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of forming Honorary Advisory Committees in connection with National Organisation arising out of the War."

This notification was duly circulated throughout the Engineering Institutions.

After the meetings of the Provisional Council of the proposed Institution of Engineers, Australia, held 15th and 16th June, 1918, Mr. Harricks, as Chairman of same and representative of the Engineering Association of N.S.W., forwarded the following letter to the Hon. W. A. Watt, Acting Prime Minister, Melbourne, and Colonel A. G. Farr, Department of Repatriation, Sydney.

24th May, 1918.

Colonel A. G. Farr,
Department of Repatriation,
York and Erskine Streets, SYDNEY.

Dear Sir:

ENGINEERS AND REPATRIATION.

The Provisional Council of the proposed "Institution of Engineers of Australia" met on the 15th and 16th instant at The Royal Society's House, Sydney, to draft a constitution for submission to the seventeen State Associations concerned in the movement.

During the conference, Mr. C. A. Le M. Walker addressed the delegates on the proposed scheme to appoint Honorary Advisory Committees of professional men to assist the Government in the matter of Repatriation, and a resolution was carried unanimously that the meeting was in entire sympathy with the proposal put forward by Mr. Walker, and would recommend to the Associations they respectively represented that such Associations place the services of their members in Australia at the disposal of the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of forming Honorary Advisory Committees in connection with National Organisation arising out of the War.

Yours faithfully,

D. F. J. HARRICKS,

Chairman.



Replies from both the gentlemen previously referred to were received expressing their pleasure at the contents of the letter and the text of the resolution. The letter from the Acting Prime Minister advised us of the fact that the offer would be forwarded to the Comptroller of Repatriation for comment.

After anxiously waiting till the 15th August of the same year, our Chairman thought it advisable to again approach the Department of Defence and Repatriation, and Colonel Farr asked for an appointment with the Chairman to discuss the subject of assistance from this Association.

More delay occurred until, at the request of the Hon. Secretary of the Sydney University Engineering Society, further consideration was given to the subject and a joint meeting was convened for 6th January, 1919, to consider what steps should be taken by the members in "The important matter of Repatriation." At which the following were present and business referred to hereafter was transacted.

Present:—Engineering Association of N.S.W.—Mr. D. F. J. Harricks (President), Mr. Jas. Vicars (Vice-President), Mr. Jas. McNamara (Hon. Secretary); University Engineering Society—Mr. J. P. Tivey (President), Mr. H. H. Dare; Electrical Association of Australia, N.S.W. Section—Mr. F. Kneeshaw (President), Mr. G. A. Julius, Mr. J. P. Strickland, Mr. R. Vine-Hall.

1. Mr. Harricks explained the reason for convening the meeting, and read the resolution passed at the meeting of the Provisional Council at the instance of Mr. C. A. Le M. Walker, on the 24th May, 1918. Mr. Julius moved that Mr. Harricks take the Chair; carried.

2. Mr. Kneeshaw suggested that Mr. Harricks be deputed to meet the Chairman of the N.S.W. Repatriation Committee and put our views before his Committee, but it was thought preferable that we get into touch with Mr. Nangle and find out in what direction he is working. In this connection it was moved by Mr. Strickland that Mr. Harricks, Mr. Kneeshaw and Mr. Julius form a sub-committee; seconded by Mr. Vicars and carried.

It was suggested that this sub-committee spend two weeks gathering information from various sources as to what is being done in the various circles.

It was left in the hands of the President to convene the next meeting.

The attached letter from Mr. Russell Sinclair was read.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Department of Repatriation,
State of New South Wales.

Dawes Point,
Sydney, 24th October, 1918.

Messrs. Wildridge & Sinclair, Ltd.,
97 Pitt Street,
SYDNEY.

Dear Sir:

VOCATIONAL TRAINEES IN PRIVATE
WORKSHOPS.

Arrangements can be made by this Department whereby Returned Soldiers can be placed with a Private Firm of employers for training, in any approved trade, provided the employer is prepared to pay the trainee 40 per cent. of the minimum wage award to that trade.

Every three months the efficiency of the trainee is re-assessed by a committee equally representing the employers and employees, the employer paying any increased efficiency.

The proportion of trainees must not exceed one (1) to every six (6) of skilled operatives employed in any one trade.

I shall be glad if you can assist this Department by taking one or more trainees in your works.

I may state that there is no obligation on your part to retain any trainee who is in any way unsatisfactory.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) A. G. Farr,
Deputy Comptroller.

The members of the "General Committee" appointed from the various Associations were:—

Professor Warren (Sydney University)

Mr. J. P. Tivey

Mr. H. H. Dare

Mr. H. M. Larkins

Mr. J. J. C. Bradfield

Mr. G. A. Julius

Mr. R. Vine Hall

Mr. T. P. Strickland

Mr. F. P. Kneeshaw

Mr. Jas. Vicars

Mr. Russell Sinclair

Mr. D. F. J. Harricks (Chairman)

Mr. Walter Reeks

Mr. J. McNamara (Hon. Secretary)

A Sub-Committee, consisting of Messrs. Harricks, Julius and Kneeshaw, to enquire into the position concerning Repatriation as it affects the Engineering Industries, and with the object of recommending a course to be adopted by the joint committee of the Society in order to render assistance to the Department, held many meetings, and on the 13th March, 1919, it submitted a lengthy report of its findings. The principal result from its researches was the emphasis laid upon Vocational Training, and the fact that so far no engineer had been appointed to this important committee.

Both the Chairman of the State Repatriation Committee (Mr. Mark Sheldon) and Mr. Jas. Nangle, the Superintendent of the Technical Education Department, thoroughly appreciated the assistance that could be given by representatives of the

various Engineering Associations upon the Vocational Committee, and the Sub-Committee recommended that Mr. Nangle be advised that this Committee deserves to be represented upon the Vocation Committee.

Mr. Mark Sheldon was of the opinion that a Training School be established which, although under the control of the Education Branch, would be run independently of the Sydney Technical College, and in such a scheme the offer of assistance outlined by this Association would be of immense practical value.

As a result of the meeting of 13/3/1919 it was decided that at least three members should represent the Engineering Societies on the Vocational Committee, and those chosen were:—

Mr. Hector Kidd, Engineering Association;
 Mr. F. Kneeshaw, Electrical Association;
 Mr. G. A. Julius, University Engineering Society.

As it was understood that the State Government had an extensive scheme in hand for purposes of Vocational Training, the above committee were asked to interview the Chief Railway Commissioner and obtain from him an outline of the intended scheme.

The need of assisting professional men returning from the front to obtain suitable employment was very freely discussed, and it was resolved that the five Engineering Societies in Sydney, as well as the Northern Engineering Institute, be written to asking for nominations for members to comprise the Appointments Committee. The following letter sent to these Associations will prove of interest:—

2nd April, 1919.

The Hon. Secretary,
Northern Engineering Institute of N.S.W.,
35 Hunter Street, NEWCASTLE.

Dear Sir :

REPATRIATION.

At a joint committee meeting of the Electrical Association of Australia (N.S.W. Section) University Engineering Society, and Engineering Association of N.S.W. appointed to devise some means of assisting the Repatriation Department in the matter of the vocational training of men returning from the front, particularly as regards the engineering industry, it was suggested that an appointments committee be formed consisting of representatives of the engineering societies in this State, with a view to assisting professional men, especially those returning from the war, to obtain appointments.

It was realised at the joint committee meeting how frequently the notice of these associations has been called to the case of engineers returning to civil life who have had difficulty in obtaining posts in keeping with their attainments.

If your Institute is prepared to adopt the suggestion and appoint a representative, I should be pleased if you would notify me of this, and of the name of the member chosen as your representative, as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,

J. McNAMARA,

Acting Hon. Secretary of the Joint Committee.

In reply to this letter the names of the appointees from the Association were as follows:—

Local Government Engineers—Mr. T. H. Kirkpatrick

Northern Engineering Institute—Mr. C. A. Sussmilch

Electrical Association, N.S.W.—Mr. J. P. Tivey
Institute of Civil Engineers Advisory Committee—
Mr. Percy Allen

Engineering Association, N.S.W.—Mr. Hector Kidd
Sydney University Engineering Society—Mr. Wm. Poole .

Not much progress was made in this matter for some months until Mr. Harricks as Chairman of the Joint Committee deemed it advisable to make further inquiries as to what steps were being taken to make use of the practical assistance offered by the Engineering Association of N.S.W., and he, after interviewing both Mr. James Nangle and Mr. Mark Sheldon, called a special meeting of the Repatriation Committee of the Association, at which the delay in accepting the help offered was very freely discussed. Matters seemed as though they had been definitely side-tracked, for it was not until September, 1919, that any official notification was made that recognition of our efforts was at last to be given.

On the 17th September the Deputy Comptroller of Repatriation asked that the name of the Chairman of the Association Committee (Mr. D. F. J. Harricks) be submitted for gazettal to the State Vocational Training Committee. The appointment met with the hearty approval of the members, and on the 18th of December Mr. Harricks finally entered upon his duties on our behalf.

There is no doubt but the splendid help offered by the members of this Association would have formed the nucleus of a system of practical training the like of which has never been in evidence in Australia before, and perhaps will never again be available for such purposes.

To all those who so unselfishly put forward their endeavours to assist in training the young returned soldier, the thanks of this Association and, indeed, that of the public generally are due. It is a matter of great regret that those in charge of this important and essential Department of Repatriation did not give this matter the consideration it so justly deserved.