

# NEWS OF THE DAY

## WAR CABINET

The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Padden) announced at the conclusion of the War Cabinet in Sydney yesterday that the Cabinet would sit in Melbourne next week, but the date had not been determined. War Cabinet will resume its sitting in Sydney today, and a meeting of the War Council will be held later in the day.

## Initiative

In a recent despatch from Cairo after the campaign in Greece, the special representative of "The Age" with the A.I.F. referred to the lack of initiative of the German soldiers. Veterans of the last war declare that this is the one feature common to the old German army and the new. On the other hand Australians have shown initiative in many spheres, in negotiating tank traps in the Western Desert in Egypt and in eluding Nazi dive bombers in the famous withdrawal to the coast in Greece. Soldiers in training in Australia are encouraged to develop initiative and not to rely entirely on their officers, and this system has brought good results. An instance of this was provided at the Town Hall yesterday when the lower hall was handed over for use as a recruiting centre. The hall was crowded, and it was decided that amplifiers should be used to enable the large crowd in Swanston-street to hear the speeches. But when Private K. Crespin, of the Army Signal Corps, came to connect the amplifiers with the microphone, he found that the lead was not long enough. Quickly sizing up the situation he dashed across the road, borrowed a radio set, tuned in to the broadcast of the proceedings, and relayed it through his amplifiers to the waiting crowd. So everybody was happy, particularly Private Crespin.

## Public Service Enlistments

Except for professional and skilled officers whose work is of public necessity, the State Government places no restrictions on enlistment of its public servants. A correspondent in "The Age" complained of a Commonwealth public service ban. The State Public Service Commissioner's office yesterday said 350 members of the general division of the permanent service had enlisted for overseas, as well as 350 teachers, while 80 were in home defence. These figures did not include temporary employees, railways, Country Roads Board and other State instrumentalities, which did not come directly under the commissioner. In addition, of course, hundreds were enrolled for national service. Those who joined the A.I.F. had the difference between public service and military pay made up for a period of sixteen days in each year. In addition to en-

pay made up for a period of sixteen days in each year. In addition to enlistments, the State had loaned many professional and skilled officers to the Commonwealth for national work. This referred even to clerks, as owing to a severe shortage the Commonwealth after the outbreak of war had to apply to the State for clerical officers to help it out of its difficulties.

## Duke of Hamilton

The Duke of Hamilton, whom Rudolf Hess says he intended to visit, is probably one of the best known men in Britain. Formerly the Marquis of Clydesdale, is now premier peer of Scotland, and Hereditary Keeper of Holyrood Palace. He is the 14th Duke of Hamilton, a title created in 1643, and from 1930 until his succession to the Dukedom last year he was Unionist M.P. for East Renfrewshire. Now he is in the House of Lords. He was chief pilot of the Mount Everest Expedition of 1933, and was the first man to fly over Everest. Born in 1903, the Duke was educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, and for many years has been a prominent officer of the Auxiliary Air Force. In 1931 he was appointed to the command of the City of Glasgow bomber squadron. He is also hon. colonel of the 83rd (Blythswood) Anti-Aircraft Regiment. For his Everest flight he was awarded the Air Force Cross, and he is also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. The Duke has a wide range of interests. He is a member of the National Fitness Council, Scotland; treasurer of the Boys' Brigade, a director of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society, and a member of the King's Bodyguard for Scotland (the Royal Company of Archers). He is also widely known as a boxer and skier. In 1937 he married Lady Elizabeth Percy, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, thereby ending the famous family feud between the Douglasses and the Percys.

## Closing Unused Roads

Country roads are closed by the Lands department only when the department is satisfied that there are no local objections. Officers of the department explained this yesterday in reply to a complaint in "The Age." They said the department relied on the advice of local councils as to the desirability or otherwise of closing a road and selling it for farming purposes. Only unused and unmade roads were closed. It was explained that the department, when an application was made to resume an unused road, notified adjoining landowners and the local council. It was the duty of the local council to make the application public, and the request was laid on the council table for a period sufficient to allow objections to be lodged. When informed that no objections were made the application was dealt with by the department. Anybody could lodge an objection, and in the experience of the department the objections were generally upheld.

## City's Growing Wealth

For the purposes of insurance, the

For the purposes of insurance, the Town Hall and properties controlled by the City Council have been valued at £1,283,625. This total represents an increase on the previous year's assessment of £35,475. The Town Hall itself is valued at £276,275. The various properties are not only insured against fire, explosion, and damage, but also against riots, aircraft damage, and loss of rentals.

### ***The Digger Spirit***

"I know it is only a drop in the ocean, but I hope it will buy a bullet or two to find a billet in the hide of some of our enemies." So wrote a returned soldier pensioner to the Lord Mayor (Cr. Beaurepaire). The ex-soldier, who was a sergeant in the A.I.F. in the last war, enclosed a 10/- note for the war loan. He explained that because of illness and necessity to meet medical and other bills, the 10/- note was all he could spare, but he considered it was better to give even more than one could spare than to have it confiscated by a brutal and callous foe.

### ***Tramways Revenue***

While no official figure has yet been made public as to the increase so far this year in the revenue of the Tramways Board over that of last financial year, it is evident that it must be substantial. Union officials who have a good idea of the position from reports of heavy money bags from their members, estimate that by the end of the year the increase will be in the neighborhood of £275,000. One result of the buoyant figures has been an application by the union for a war allowance for the employees. The direction in which the public is immediately concerned relates to the possibility of lower fares. A strong case could be made out for some relief on long-distance lines such as Carnegie, East Brighton, Coburg and East Kew.

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Mr. McKell, the Premier elect of New South Wales, said yesterday that one of the senior Ministers would be given charge of air raids precautions. The Labor party was determined to do everything possible in connection with slum problems. His Government would establish a housing commission, to co-ordinate and supervise housing conditions throughout the State.