

VISIT OF BOYS' BRIGADE OFFICIALS

Organisation's Work Explained

Although the Boys' Brigade has been in existence for over 65 years, and was first commenced in Australia about 15 years ago, its activities are not widely known as yet, and it is two officials from headquarters in London who have awakened interest in this interdenominational boys' organisation.

Mr. E. S. Robertson, who has been in charge of training officers at headquarters, and Mr. L. W. Lewis, a former member of headquarters' executive, have both been officers in the Brigade for over 40 years. They are at present visiting Australia on holiday but have combined this with work for headquarters and bringing goodwill messages to Australian companies. Their visit to Horsham was to meet the officers in charge of the company which is centred at the Church of Christ.

During their visits to various centres, Messrs. Robertson and Lewis have found that the organisation is growing in Australia and that, being firmly established, its future seems well assured.

The following details regarding the organisation are of interest:

The Boys' Brigade is the oldest of the British organisations for boys, for it was founded by Sir William Smith in Glasgow in 1883. Its object is "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom amongst boys, and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness."

Today there are over 2800 B.B. Companies in Great Britain and Ireland, each of them attached to a Church or other Christian organisation. With nearly 100,000 boys in its ranks, the Brigade is growing stronger every year. It has spread across the world and is growing today in Africa, Australia, Canada, Malaya, New Zealand, West Indies, the South Sea Islands and India. The Companies in Great Britain take a real interest in their brothers overseas and contribute thousands of pounds annually to the Missionary Societies of the Churches.

The Companies of the Boys' Brigade

are led by over 10,000 officers. They are all voluntary workers, and most of them served in the Brigade as boys. The boys' ages range from 12 to 18. There is a junior branch—The Life Boy—with a strength of nearly 60,000 boys of 9 to 12 years of age. A B.B. Company consists of about 40 boys subdivided into squads, each under a senior boy as N.C.O. Thus practical training is given in leadership and responsibility, leading many to a life of active voluntary service to their Church and to the community in which they live.

FOUNDATIONS OF MOVEMENT.

Religion and discipline are the foundations of the movement, which has proved that boys will respond to the highest ideal and that they appreciate discipline. By means of the drill parade on a week night and the Bible class on Sunday, the basis of real character-training is established. There is a wide range of other activities. These include physical training, gymnastics, football, cricket, club rooms, bands, ambulance, swimming, life-saving, signalling, handicrafts, nature study and camping. The Brigade publishes training manuals and handbooks, and a graded scheme of certificates and badges provides a useful incentive to boys to reach a good standard of all-round proficiency, the highest award of all being the "King's Badge."

Great displays and rallies are held at most of the larger centres every year when the results of the training are shown and thousands of the boys go camping every summer.

The uniform consists of a simple and effective equipment of cap, belt and satchel, worn over their own clothing. Boys pay by weekly subscription towards the cost of running their Company and the expenses of the national administration is largely borne by the Companies of the Brigade and their friends. In Britain, both nationally and locally, the Brigade received valuable assistance from the Ministry of Education.

Its appeal to boy nature is the secret of the Brigade's success. It captures the boy, and by giving him a purpose in life, casts its spell on him and gradually leads him upward to the service of his fellows and the service of his God. It succeeds because it is based on the soundest foundations; and is conducted on commonsense lines. The boy has something to do, something to live for, the Brigade develops all that

live for, the Brigade develops all that is best in the boy, subduing what is worst, and gradually evolving a Christian man.

The words "Sure and Steadfast" on its crest are a true description of the Boys' Brigade and of the spirit that helped it to play its part during the 65 years undaunted by the ordeals of two world wars. The B.B. goes forward—now in confidence of even greater achievements yet for boyhood in many parts of the world.

WORK IN WAR-TIME.

During the war, great numbers of Brigade boys were trained for the civil defence services, and they earned high praise for their efficiency as voluntary fire-fighters, messengers, first-aid attendants, hospital orderlies and stretcher-bearers, assistant air-raid wardens, cyclist despatch riders and in many other forms of service. Thousands of boys have been awarded the B.B. National Service Badge. Many have won commendation and awards for bravery during air raids.

With their knowledge of first-aid, many served at hospitals and first-aid posts. At one big hospital in Glasgow, while air raids were at their height, the B.B. stretcher-bearers all reported for duty and dealt with many cases. "Thank God for the B.B.," said the hospital superintendent. In the Fire Service, too, boys trained for the B.B. Fireman's Badge, did gallant work, and in more than one place have saved their own Churches and halls from destruction.