

Christian Science Monitor, December 30, 41

Women Speed Australian Arms Output

By Australian Associated Press. CANBERRA, Australia, Dec. 30—An industrial council to deal with industrial problems such as expansion of the output of munitions and materials of war is to be set up immediately, it was announced yesterday. This decision was reached at a conference of employers, employees, senior ministers, arbitration court judges and state industrial commissioners. Regulations for the establishment of this new authority were being promulgated by the conference. The Council will comprise eight employers and eight employees' representatives, an expert deputy chairman and a chairman.

Special to The Christian Science Monitor. PARRAMATTA, New South Wales—Australian war industry is moving onto a new plane as the war enters its third year. This South Pacific arsenal of democracy is opening new munitions plants to be operated very largely by women.

In New South Wales four new plants are being built in the city of Sydney and in various unpopulated country regions. They will cost \$21,000,000 at present rates of exchange and will be operated by 21,000 workers. Nine thousand of these, at a minimum estimate, will be women. These plants will make explosives, ammunition for guns, rifles and shell fuses.

Factory a Misnomer While the Federal Government does not deny the difficulties of staffing so many plants as those it is at present opening, this particular batch of factories is expected to be provided with its necessary personnel because there are 6,000 women registered at the Government Women's Employment Agency in Sydney. In South Australia 2,000 women workers have been signed on by

U. S. Fortes to Use Australia as Base?

By Australian Associated Press. Canberra, Australia, Dec. 30 It was learned in Canberra that Australia may be used as an operational base by United States and Netherlands forces in the Pacific, as well as by British Empire forces. Supporting this belief, orders were issued during the week end making provision for billeting of defense personnel of Allied Powers in Australian hotels, boarding houses and private homes. Another development considered significant was President Roosevelt's declaration that the United States will assist Australia in the war effort.

a new plant making small arms ammunition, 1,000 women have been taken to a new gun ammunition plant and 6,500 more will soon be needed to help operate explosive and shell-filling factories.

Up until now the greater proportion of the women have been placed in explosive factories where they are employed to measure quantities, and in shell-filling plants where they handle the charges.

"Factory" is a misnomer for these new Australian plants. They resemble small cities. The plant in South Australia owns 1,100 separate buildings, covers an area of nine square miles and has three railroad stations to set down its 12,000 employees at their respective sections of the works.

A beginning was made with this system at the Commonwealth Explosives Factory in Melbourne, one of the Australian state-owned arsenals, and at a privately-operated explosives plant built under the Australian shadow-plan which

doubled up existing munitions plants long before war began. But the situation has been changed by switches in production programs and by determining, for example, that the Lithgow Small Arms Factory shall make nothing but machineguns. This meant transferring of the plant's previous output of rifles to other centers and the result is that what used to be done at Lithgow is now being carried on by three new industrial units.

Organizing for Attack The most cursory scanning of Australia's war production gives a picture of a British Empire which is organizing production of ammunition on a scale undreamed of by any of its leaders a few years ago. The quantities of cordite and TNT which are pouring from Australian plants are unbelievable when the size of the country is realized.

This is an empire which is plainly organizing for an offensive. Where this blow will come is a matter of conjecture, but Australians leave no doubt that the war machine which the British began to build two years ago is going to be able to offer formidable opposition to the Axis before it is through. Ever yet the peak is nowhere in sight here.

For this organization the efforts of Australian women are going to be used on a large scale. Many of the women now offering their services for arms making are young wives whose husbands have gone to the battle zone and who seek to occupy their time, instead of sitting back to fill that waiting role which is most wearing to women in warime, and also to carry out a public duty.

Others come from homes where they have never had to embark on paid duty before. But most are themselves factory workers anxious to transfer to what they think more essential roles in a world at war.

N. Y. Times, Dec. 3

CRUISER SYDNEY LOST IN VICTORY

Australia Lacks Word of Ship and Her 645 Men After She Destroyed Nazi Raider

SURVIVING FOES GIVE NEWS

Sloop Sunk and 141 of Her Crew Are Believed Dead, Canberra Also Says

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES. CANBERRA, Australia, Dec. 2— Since destroying an enemy raider some days ago, the Australian cruiser Sydney has been lost, Premier John Curtin announced today.

and men and she was commanded by Captain Joseph Burnett. Intensive search has failed to reveal any trace of the Sydney or of any member of her crew, although a number of survivors of the raider she destroyed in what apparently was her last fight have been rescued. It is the greatest naval loss suffered by Australia in this or the last war.

In addition, Mr. Curtin announced that the 1,060-ton Australian sloop Parramatta had been torpedoed and sunk while on escort duty, and that 141 of her total complement of 161 officers and men were missing and believed killed. [An Associated Press dispatch from Canberra said that the Parramatta apparently was on escort duty in the Mediterranean at the time.]

Premier's Announcement In revealing the loss of the 6,830-ton Sydney, Mr. Curtin said that the Navy Board had informed him that the cruiser had engaged a heavily armed merchant raider, which she had sunk by gunfire; that that information had come from survivors of the raider picked up after the action, and that no subsequent communication had been received from the Sydney which, the government regretted to announce, must be presumed lost.

[A Canberra dispatch of The Associated Press reported that the Sydney had been lost after destroying the 9,400-ton German raider Steiermark. It said the Steiermark carried 400 men, but that it was not disclosed how many had been saved.]

Premier Curtin said that from a reconstruction of stories told by the surviving German prisoners, the Sydney and Steiermark fired simultaneously and both were set afire, the United Press reported. The prisoners, he said, added that torpedoes were fired at the Sydney.]

The Australian Navy Minister, Norman J. O. Makin, said in a statement that while hope was not abandoned and it was difficult to believe that the Sydney had foundered, the time by which she was overdue indicated that the worst fears were justified. Search, he said, would continue until the government was positive that everything possible had been done.

Mr. Curtin, too, said that extensive aerial and surface search for survivors was continuing. Next of kin, to whom the government extended the deepest sympathy, were informed last Wednesday, it was announced.

Herald Tribune, Dec. 30

Curtin Explains Australia Still Looks to British

Insists on Voice in War Planning, but Denies Aim Is to Act Independently

MELBOURNE, Dec. 29 (UP)—Prime Minister John Curtin denied today that Australia, by insisting that her voice be heard in Pacific war planning and drawing closer to the United States, has any thought of acting independently of Great Britain and the British Empire.

Political opponents, including William Morris Hughes, United Australia party leader and former External Affairs Minister, had attacked Curtin's foreign-policy statement of Saturday, interpreting it as meaning that Australia should look to Russia and the United States for aid rather than to Britain.

"Australia, as an integral part of the British Commonwealth," Curtin said today, "is facing strategic problems of its own defense with which the British Commonwealth, and we intend to do so. Therefore our voice must be heard."

"It is sheer illusion to imagine that without a definite plan of cohesion between the United States, Russia, China, the Netherlands, Britain and Australia in relation to problems of the Pacific the dangers to Australia can be averted."

Aircraft Expansion Mapped Meanwhile, Curtin completed plans for tremendous expansion of aircraft production, which the War Cabinet is scheduled to approve tomorrow.

As the propelling force for revolutionary reorganization of the industry, the government created today the post of Director General of Aircraft Production and placed in it Essington Lewis, who is to have wide executive powers.

Curtin is determined, it was said, that Australia will merit powerful assistance from her friends by making powerful efforts to help herself. He believes that the most practical short-range step toward safeguarding Australia and strengthening the whole Allied position in the Pacific is to increase warplane production. Factory methods are to be improved, it was said, additional factories built remote from bombing risks and stocks accumulated.

Lewis, Australia's foremost production genius, was until the war general manager of the Brokenhill Steel Company, which produces Australia's entire steel output. James Bristock Bridgen, economist and secretary to the Munitions Department, today was appointed economic adviser to the Australian Legation in Washington at the request of Minister Richard G. Casey. His principal duty will be procurement of American supplies for Australia's armed forces.

Chic. D. News, Dec. 19

Australian Troops Unite In Palestine and Syria

Canberra, Australia, Dec. 19.—(AP)—Army Minister Francis Forde said today that Australian imperial forces in the Middle East have been concentrated in Palestine and Syria as a unified force. The action was recommended by Gen. Sir Thomas Blamey, commander of the Australian forces.

N. Y. Times, Dec. 31

Australia Adopts Daylight Time SYDNEY, Australia, Dec. 30 (AP)—At 2 A. M. on New Year's morning Australia will push its clocks ahead one hour, going on daylight saving time for the first time since the World War. This will place eastern Australia, with the major cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, sixteen hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

PM, Dec. 9

Australia Declares War:

Australia joined the ranks of those formally at war with Japan on the heels of an announcement that two Australian mandated islands, Nauru and Ocean, had been bombed in the western Pacific.

PM, Dec. 12

Melbourne: Communique No. 1

The Australian Air Force, in the first war communique ever issued in Australia, announced that one plane had failed to return from reconnaissance flights at sea.

C. Science Monitor, Dec. 26

Role in World Affairs Taken By Australia's Labor Regime

Special to The Christian Science Monitor. SYDNEY, New South Wales, Dec. 26—The strong line being taken by the new Labor Government of Australia in world affairs is becoming more and more marked. This is believed to be due partly to the fact that the Labor Government is less trammelled by big business associations, which often make for extreme caution, and partly to the fact that Prime Minister John Curtin has an unusually able lieutenant in Herbert Vere Evatt, Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs. The Prime Minister created an entirely new precedent in his direct approach to President Roosevelt Dec. 23. It is most unusual for the head of a Dominion Government to address the head of a foreign country directly. But the Prime Minister was determined to ensure that the Australian viewpoint on Pacific strategy was adequately presented at the Roosevelt-Churchill talks at the White House.

Mr. Curtin feels that Australia has too much to lose if the Pacific position is not handled properly and is grimly determined that it shall never be said that his Government lacked the courage to force

the issue when necessary.

World Role Taken Australia now seems likely to play an increasingly important part in Empire affairs—not only during the war, but after the war, in the task of remaking the world.

Indeed, the new realism with which Australia's big problems are being approached is stimulating to civilians and soldiers alike. While the approach of the enemy to these shores undoubtedly played a major part in the rush of recruits, it is also apparent that the lead given by Mr. Curtin was a vital factor in starting the recruits pouring in for the Australian Imperial Force at a rate which took everyone by surprise.

A recruiting spokesman said that "when the ban was imposed to prevent home defense and militia men from enlisting in the Imperial Force, we thought that recruiting would suffer a severe setback, but hundreds are coming in daily."

Ready to Serve Overseas "Moreover, large numbers of militia men, debarred at present from joining the Imperial Force, have volunteered for service overseas on the first opportunity on which they can be called upon."

Meanwhile some steps to meet possible enemy action have been taken only recently, others were put into effect a long time ago.

Profiting by the lessons of the blitz on London, the New South Wales Fire Board has completed elaborate arrangements for the protection of Sydney from raids. If water is cut off following the destruction of the mains, a hundred great cellars in the metropolitan area can be converted into water tanks.

Fire commissioners took a census of cellars two years ago and are now ready to fill them for the emergency.

Water Stocks Depleted

In the September, 1940, raids London's reserve stocks of water, being stored together, were destroyed. The board here has dispersed the stocks, with the result that if the five main stations are put out of action, temporary central control can be established in a few minutes in any one of dozens of other stations in the metropolitan district.

Should 20 major fires start simultaneously and require all the male personnel, service can be maintained, at least temporarily, by women volunteers.

The Women's Fire Auxiliary numbers more than 3,000, who have done a full course of instruction, plus the handling of incendiaries.

Australia World War, 1939-1945

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