

20TH REINFORCEMENTS

SEND OFF TO-DAY FROM DUNEDIN. A VERY FINE DRAFT, BUT FORTY SHORT.

The morning was bright and the wind exhilarating, and the arrangements in connection with the send-off of the 20th Reinforcements from Dunedin were carried out on the established and approved system, which is another way of stating that everything went like a Waterbury watch, for all who have the ordering of the scheme — the military, the police, the railway officials, the ladies at the halls, and the civilians who come into contact with the authorities at all points — know exactly what to do, when to do it, and how to get the job performed with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of efficiency.

AT THE DRILL HALL.

The Dunedin quota mustered at the Kensington Drill Hall, where a short and earnest address was delivered by Colonel E. R. Smith.

Lieutenant-colonel Stoneham and other members of the Recruiting Committee were present, and Mrs Macfie and Mrs Beaumont represented the ladies' branch of that committee.

Mrs Macfie addressed the departing men, as follows: — Volunteers, — The privilege and pleasure falls to me, on behalf of the women of the Otago Recruiting Committee, to say a few words which, when uttered, but poorly and inadequately express one's feelings on these occasions; but what one lacks in giving expression to is amply made up in what we feel towards you brave lads, who in coming forward are ready and willing to make, if need be, the supreme sacrifice in the cause of King and country. You are the reinforcements of the glorious Anzacs — (applause) — some now of immortal fame, whose names and actions will adorn the pages of history and whose achievements will live as long as the British Empire lives. It is for you lads to help carry on to a successful finish, if your health and strength will permit that great task begun on Gallipoli, and pray do not underrate that task. Germany's organisation is the summit of very perfection; it is the product of the shrewdest and ablest minds for 30 years and more. We, with an army hastily scratched up from civic life, and ignorant when they enlist of the first principles of soldiering, cannot hope to suddenly break down the enemy's defences. But we have right, and now with your help we have might, and these two must prevail. Victory will be ours, and we hope to crush for ever German militarism run riot. (Applause.) In your preparing for active service we women ask you to be patient and painstaking, which, of course, means a ready and a willing obedience and compliance to all orders. No doubt some of you may find the training a little irksome, but remember that success in any object in life has to

be worked for. Most of you are just the raw material which has to be licked into shape, and some are Gallipoli heroes returning to the battlefield. Ere long we hope you will be on a par with them and with those fine specimens of soldiers whom we had the honor of farewelling last Saturday. For the great field of work which lies ahead every man is and will be needed; therefore it is of the highest national importance that you keep as fit as is possible. Remember there are many pitfalls for the unwary soldier which would lead to your undoing, but when the temptation comes along, boys, think of your mothers, sisters, and loved ones, who with other women are praying and working to increase the comfort on your journey and in the trenches. Think of them, and turn aside and pray to God to keep and guard you until you return to us, where I need not say warm hearts await our brave defenders of Empire. (Applause.)

The men were played in on the march by the Maori Hill Band, conducted by Mr J. Simpson, Lieutenant George acting as guide.

AT MORNING TEA.

The southern men arrived by the express, and were met by Colonel Cowie Nicholls and Major Cooper. Sergeant-major Guinan, who went away with the main body, and served with the Anzacs in the Otago Battalion, and is now on the permanent staff, came up in charge of this party. Lieutenant Dobson led them to the Early Settlers' Hall, where the ladies had a most appetising spread ready for them.

IN ANZAC SQUARE.

Both bodies entered the roped enclosure at 11.25, amid spontaneous and ringing cheers from a great crowd, and, less than a minute sufficing to set the ranks straight, Major Moller reported to the Mayor (Mr Clark) that he could take charge. His Worship: As is customary, we will start by singing the National Anthem.

The multitude responded in great style.

His Worship: Though the weather is cold, our appreciation of the recruits is as warm as ever. Let us show that appreciation by three cheers.

Again the crowd lifted up their voices with effect, and in answer to a call from the rear "Are we downhearted?" there was a great roar "No!" followed by further cheers.

His Mayor's address was substantially as follows: — Two long, weary years have passed since we entered upon this bitter war, and today we realise more than ever the desperate struggle that we are engaged upon. Yes are we downhearted? Though clouds and darkness are round about us, the heart of the whole mighty Empire beats strong and true. No matter what reverses we may be called upon to endure, we wait with fortitude and confidence the end, for we know that victory will ultimately crown our arms. Who is there that for a moment doubts that, though long delayed, victory will come to us? We see through the smoke of battle the gleam of the dawn of the day when the bells shall peal the glad news of the triumph. (Applause.) The German war lord never made a greater mistake than when he thought that because the British Empire was not a blatant military nation

or aggressive in her actions she was weak and degenerate, with no fight left in her. Never in her long history, full of glorious achievements and heroic deeds, has our Empire shone forth so magnificently as in the present world crisis. One has not lived the last two years without being made to feel that the old fighting spirit which built up our glorious Empire is not dead, or even asleep. It is alive and alert, and her sons are as willing as ever to gladly answer the call to arms. Men of Otago and Southland, we wish you God-speed in your glorious work. We realise that you are setting forth on your march to Berlin from a simple, high sense of duty. You have made a great sacrifice, and we cannot but have the greatest admiration for your having voluntarily offered your services. You are here as volunteers, and your honor is that you have not had to be forced as conscripts. You go to face the foe as free men.

The men from this outpost of Empire have by sublime courage written the name of "New Zealand" deep in the heart of the nation. Anzac is the coping-stone of Imperialism. I am certain that the valor of you young heroes will match that of your comrades in the field. (Applause.) God keep you all, and bring you back in safety to the loving hearts that wait for you. Our faith in you is strong, and we confidently leave the honor of our land in your hands. When you come back to us, may your record be such that your deeds will be enshrined for ever in the hearts of all who value noble ideals and heroic courage. Good-bye. Good luck to you, boys. (Applause.)

The Rev. S. G. Griffith was the other speaker. He said that the two years of awful trial through which our Empire had passed had proved, amongst other things, that the men of the present day, gathered at the outskirts of the Empire, are worthy sons of noble sires. Our soldiers have as keen a sense of right and are as ready to do their duty as the men who faced the foe in the heroic days of England's past history. He felt proud to stand before the representatives of Newest England in these Southern lands, and, as he looked into their faces, to be able to feel sure that they were men who at the call of righteousness and justice had voluntarily put themselves into the breach, prepared to fight, prepared to die if necessary. (Applause.) The men now leaving were going to fight alongside of soldiers who have made a name that will never die, and he believed that when they met those soldiers and marched with them and fought with them they would prove worthy to wear the title of "Anzac," which means so much to us and to all the world. (Applause.) Those assembled were anxious that the men should realise that this fight was not between the German people and the British, not between the Central Powers and the Entente, but between the forces of Right and Wrong — a fight for Liberty as against Oppression, the might of God as against the powers of Evil — and that in this fight we should realise that our strongest ally is the almighty arm of the never-failing God; wherefore, as long as God lives and Right obtains we can look forward to a successful issue with certainty. "We believe in you," added Mr Griffith; "we believe that you will show yourselves to be worthy of your mothers and sisters; we believe you are worthy of this Newest England; we

believe that you will stand in the day of trial like true representatives of the long line of honored soldiers that have fought for us in the past; and we believe that you will stand by the principles of right and justice and uphold the honor of the Flag. May God bless you and bring you back victorious and unstained.”

The rev. gentleman then prayed for God’s blessing on the men who were leaving and for the wives and mothers and daughters who were left.

At the call of the Mayor the crowd sang “For they are jolly good fellows,” and the men marched on to the platform to the strains of patriotic music by the band.

THE PERSONNEL

It is expected that the quota for the Otago district will be over 40 short. Invercargill were 32 short, and Dunedin 20 short, but Milton was able to send on 16 extra men. This made a shortage of 36 by the time the train left Dunedin, and as the Oamaru officers anticipate being a few short it may safely be said that the Otago deficiency is over 40. Men will be sent forward next week to make good this shortage. Defaulters were solely responsible for Dunedin’s shortage. Major Moller had just sufficient men on hand to complete his quota, but this morning 20 failed to answer their names.

As a set-off to this numerical disappointment, the departing soldiers seemed to be a particularly fit and eager lot. They moved with marked alacrity, and they were full of spirit. They jumped into the train very smartly, and appeared to be on the look-out to anticipate orders. The leave-taking occupied but a few moments.

ROLL CALL.

The following are the names of the men who went forward from the Dunedin group to-day: —

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INFANTRY.

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Foster, Alfred Edward.

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Lieutenant M’Crorie (Dunedin) went up in charge of the men, Captain Cameron being the medical officer accompanying the train.

“Our Own” wires from Christchurch: The 20th Reinforcements, which left last night 16 short, are a very fine body physically, comprising one of the smartest-looking drafts which ever left the city. Colonel Chaffey said he believed the reinforcements were getting better and better every time, and he was proud of the men Canterbury was sending forward. Mr Holland, the Mayor, endorsed those remarks.

Wellington’s shortage in its quota for the 20th Reinforcements is 167 in all units.