

SECTION RUSSE

DE LA

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE DE RAVITAILLEMENT.

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FOR  
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EMBARKATION HEADQUARTERS,  
NORTH WESTERN HOTEL,  
LIVERPOOL.

17th.Oct. 1916

My Dear Hodge,

This letter will reach you just before the wind-up of the University year. I am taking the opportunity to let you know what I am doing. It may be that this information will be required for the purposes of the Council. Regarding my proposals for next year, I will cable before the last Council meeting.

I think I have already written to acquaint you of the nature of the work which I have been doing. Perhaps it will be as well for me to summarise it again.

On arrival in England I found that the communication from Brigadier General Foster (Chief of Imperial General Staff, Australia) to the Secretary at the War Office, sent through the Commonwealth Defence Department and the High Commissioner, had not been dealt with to the best advantage by the High Commissioner and had been side-tracked at the War Office. The object was, you understand, to use me in any sphere of war service where scientific attainments would be at a premium. On arrival in Liverpool I had been telegraphed to from the Admiralty to sit on a committee to meet that after-

noon and thereafter to advise the Government in all matters connected with the organisation of relief for the overdue Shackleton Expedition. During the several weeks that this continued I followed up Brigadier General Foster's communication at the War Office. I found that important posts for the application of science in war work were very few and had been filled long before. There was nothing at the front that gave great scope that way except in the case of a few unique offices. It was clear that there was no dearth of scientists for the work offering. By that time I had decided that my obligations to Adelaide University and to the Scientific Results of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition did not warrant me unduly jostling others in efforts to serve.

I approached Mr. Lloyd George on the matter and he sent me to Lord Moulton; the Explosives Department of the Ministry of Munitions. Lord Moulton, I discovered, has a very efficient and excellently organised department, where science is understood and appreciated.

Lord Moulton started me off by sending me to the principal explosives factories in the Kingdom, to become acquainted with their methods and processes. I was getting well on with this when the Russian Government Committee applied to him for an officer to take charge of arrangements for forwarding and stowing of dangerous chemicals and explosives which they are shipping from here in very large quantities to Russia and Roumania. As the work entailed some knowledge of ships and general procedure Lord Moulton kindly suggested that I might take it up, and the Russians agreed.

Headquarters for me has been Liverpool. I work in with the Admiralty Transports Department as a Captain in the Military Embarkation Staff.

For six weeks I was occupied mostly with framing a schedule of regulations; since then the work has been routine. A number of vessels are despatched weekly with guns, ammunition, and explosives. The White Sea season is drawing to an end now and it will be a case of storing something like 250000 tons during the winter for the opening of next season. In the mean time certain supplies will be shipped to a far-north port in connection with the new Murman Peninsula Railway which is approaching completion.

All the vessels have got through so far this season, though two I hear have just had long running fights with submarines in the White Sea.

The work of revictualling Russia is extremely important for it is on that side that the most effective blows will be dealt Germany.

To come back to my work, it is now little more than routine and could be carried on by anyone with reasonable training and chemical knowledge; I therefore see no reason to continue with it next year. The Russians have unduly rated my services to them and are anxious for me to continue. They propose transferring me to Russia. I have just told them that it may be possible for me to remain with them provided that work entailing sufficient scientific ability is forthcoming. They are to communicate with Russia in the matter.

I will, of course, cable when anything is settled.

My cable in regard to next year's work is therefore likely to be an intimation of my intended return to Adelaide and not a request for further absence. Briefly summarised the issues leading to this decision, apart from obligations to the University of Adelaide, are:

(1) The apparent adequate supply of men of sufficiently high scientific attainments for war requirements.

(2) The inadvisability from a national point of view of my serving in other capacity in view of the following:

(a) The existing large excess of officers for the British Force

(b) The increased demand (as a National necessity), henceforth, for scientific training; a consequence of the War.

(c) The admitted importance of science in Australia as exemplified by the action of the Government in withdrawing Mr. F. L. Stillwell a single, junior scientist from military service to appoint him to research work in connection with the Bendigo gold reefs.

(3) The definite preponderance now established over the Central Powers by the Allies alters future prospects entirely.

(4) It is expected by most authorities that the war will terminate some time next year, and it may be even early in the year.

(5) Responsibilities in connection with the publication of Scientific Results of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, already appearing.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Mawson

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EMBARKATION OFFICER.

TELEPHONE: ROYAL 2960.

MILITARY EMBARKATION HEADQUARTERS,

NORTH WESTERN HOTEL,

LIVERPOOL.

19th.Oct.1916

My Dear Chief Justice Murray,

I was delighted to receive your letter of August 21st. Many thanks for the information and news.

With regard to the University Lectureship I have written at length, more or less officially, It seems to me that there is more need for science at home than at the war. So I do not anticipate requesting further leave of absence from Australia. The Russian Government Committee has asked me to carry out some work on explosives for them in Russia. I may take this work up as long as possible before it will be necessary for me to proceed to Adelaide for the course of lectures. It is grand news to learn that Mr. Hughes's enthusiasm for science has not abated. There is in the British Isles now a greater appreciation of education and science. The enclosed paragraph indicates this.

The war is a terrible calamity but it has a silver lining namely that it has brought home to the mass of British people the value of technical education and scientific method. It is of course these combined with downright perseverance that has put Germany

where she is to-day, or rather was at the outbreak of the war. These qualities cannot be crushed, therefore the German people cannot be crushed. To compete we must learn to be as good as they are in these essentials in competition. Apparently all that wants crushing is the German form of Government.

I heard through a good channel some time ago that the elusive vessel the "Bremen" was captured by us and that the cargo was being disposed of on the quiet. Since then I have heard no more.

I was in London for the two big air raids when Zepellins were destroyed. There was really very little damage at all and the German stories were ludicrously untrue. It is certain that that class of craft will never compete with the aeroplane. Of the latter we are producing some magnificent ones just now. I have come to the conclusion that my hand-writing is so bad that I must stick to the machine. I am sure that it will save my friends a great deal of trouble. Already I am quite as quick as with ordinary writing.

My wife is en route to join me, and I hope will go to Russia with me returning to Australia via Siberia.

With very kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Dawson

at Vadso (extreme north of Norway, at the entrance to the Varanger Fjord), states that on Saturday three German submarines bombarded the wireless station at Jepnovalok, on the coast of the Murman Peninsula. One of the masts was destroyed and some persons were killed. A Russian destroyer then came up and a fierce fight ensued, which ended in the sinking of two of the submarines.—*Reuter*.

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## ENEMY CLAIMS IN THE CHANNEL.

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 10.—According to a telegram from Berlin, a German submarine during the period from September 30 to October 5 destroyed in the English Channel seven enemy merchantmen of a gross tonnage of 4,131 tons, and also, for carrying contraband to the enemy, three neutral steamers of a gross tonnage of 2,357 tons. Another German submarine, off the English East Coast, sank three British trawlers on October 4.—*Reuter*.

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## NEW YORK AND LONDON INSURANCE RATES.

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### A DISCREPANCY.

No further news of the depredations of German submarines was yesterday received in the London insurance market and 2 per cent. was again generally quoted on cargo from the United States to this country by "tramp" steamers. There was, however, some comment on the fact that, according to cables, New York underwriters, who during the past two years have quoted war insurance rates at least as low as, and in some cases