

NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES ASSOCIATION LUNCH - 4 DECEMBER, 1974 - 1pm

CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES HAVE PLAYED A LONG, HONOURABLE AND IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA. WHILE THE NATURE OF THE ROLE OF THE RESERVE FORCES MAY BE SEEN TO CHANGE OVER THE YEARS, THERE IS NO DOUBTING THE CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE FORCES. THE ARMY RESERVE, OR CMF AS IT USED TO BE KNOWN, IS A VITAL PART OF AUSTRALIA'S GROUND FORCE CAPABILITY. IT FORMS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE BASIS OF EXPANSION OF THE WHOLE ARMY SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.

THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE NEEDS AND STRUCTURING OF THE RESERVE IS BASED ON ITS RECOGNITION OF THE VITAL ROLE WHICH IT PLAYS. WE WERE NOT SATISFIED THAT THE RESERVE FORCES HAD BEEN PROPERLY TREATED BY PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. THE MORALE OF THE CMF SUFFERED BADLY FROM THE WAY IT WAS TREATED AS A DUMPING GROUND FOR CONSCRIPTS, OR A HAVEN FOR MEN WANTING TO AVOID CONSCRIPTION. MEN WHO HAD JOINED THE CMF AND INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE OVERSEAS IF NECESSARY IN DEFENCE OF THEIR COUNTRY FOUND THEIR SERVICES WERE NOT SOUGHT OR WANTED.

MY GOVERNMENT ABOLISHED CONSCRIPTION AND SET ABOUT MAKING SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES MORE ATTRACTIVE TO VOLUNTEERS. LAST YEAR, AS PART OF ITS EFFORTS TO REVITALISE DEFENCE, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO HAVE A COMPLETE REVIEW OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE RESERVE. THE MINISTER

FOR DEFENCE, MR BARNARD, COMMISSIONED THE FIRST-EVER INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE CMF. THE COMMITTEE WAS LED BY DR T. B. MILLAR AND ITS REPORT WAS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 4 THIS YEAR.

AT THE TIME MR BARNARD TABLED THE REPORT, HE LEFT NO DOUBT OF THIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO REVITALISE THE ARMY RESERVE. HE INDICATED THEN, AND ON SEVERAL OTHER OCCASIONS SINCE, THAT HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE BROAD RESTRUCTURING OF THE CMF RECOMMENDED BY THE CMF COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.

AS PART OF THE NORMAL PROCESS OF PROTECTING NATIONAL SECURITY WE NEED TO MAINTAIN SOME REGULAR FORCES CAPABLE OF BEING IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, AND THESE NEED TO BE BACKED UP BY RESERVE FORCES WHICH CAN BE BROUGHT TO A STATE OF READINESS IN A REASONABLY SHORT TIME. THE RESERVES MUST BE INTEGRATED WITH THE REGULARS, WITHOUT MAJOR RE-ARRANGEMENT AS IN THE PAST. REGULAR AND RESERVE COMPONENTS ARE TO BE WELDED INTO A "TOTAL FORCE" - THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY. THE ARMY RESERVE, TOGETHER WITH THE REGULAR ARMY WILL PROVIDE A VIABLE BASE FOR AN EXPANSION OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY SHOULD THIS BE NECESSARY IN THE FUTURE. WE WILL HAVE A REGULAR COMPONENT AND A RESERVE COMPONENT WORKING TOGETHER ON A BASIS AS NEAR TO EQUALITY AND PARTNERSHIP AS THEIR RESPECTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES WILL ALLOW.

TO GIVE EFFECT TO THIS POLICY, THE ARMY RESERVE IS TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE FUNCTIONAL COMMAND ORGANISATION OF THE REGULAR ARMY. IN ADDITION, ARMY RESERVE OFFICERS ARE TO BE APPOINTED AS ASSISTANT COMMANDERS TO FIELD FORCE COMMAND, LOGISTICS COMMAND AND TRAINING COMMAND. IN FACT, THE ASSISTANT COMMANDER TRAINING COMMAND HAS ALREADY ASSUMED OFFICE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO APPROVED THAT RESERVE SOLDIERS WEAR COMPARABLE UNIFORM WITH THAT WORN BY REGULAR SOLDIERS.

IN GENERAL, THE CMF AT PRESENT CAN ONLY BE USED IN TIME OF WAR OR IN THE EVENT OF A DECLARED DEFENCE EMERGENCY. MR BARNARD HAS, ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, STATED WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT THE BROAD ROLE ENVISAGED FOR THE ARMY RESERVE, WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF THE RESERVE IN SITUATIONS SHORT OF A DEFENCE EMERGENCY, IN CIVIL EMERGENCIES OR TO PROVIDE OTHER ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS. LEGISLATION MUST BE ENACTED TO GIVE FULL EFFECT TO THIS ROLE AND THE ARMY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE ARE STILL EXAMINING THE MANY COMPLEX ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION.

WHEN THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE TABLED THE MILLAR REPORT IN PARLIAMENT HE SUPPORTED THE BROAD RESTRUCTURING OF THE FORCES WHICH IT PROPOSED. CLEARLY THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION IS TO ADVANCE THE ARMY RESERVE, AND IT HAS ALREADY IMPLEMENTED SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED SINCE 4 APRIL
1974 INCLUDE:-

- THE APPOINTMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL A. C. MURCHISON AS INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE ARMY RESERVE (IN ADDITION TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES MEMBER). ON HIS RETIREMENT ON 27 OCTOBER HE WAS REPLACED BY MAJOR GENERAL J. M. MACDONALD.

- THE ARMY RESERVE BRANCH IN ARMY OFFICE HAS BEEN RAISED AND MAJOR GENERAL B. A. McDONALD HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS CHIEF OF THE ARMY RESERVE. THE RESERVE BRANCH HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF REPRESENTING ARMY RESERVE INTERESTS AND WILL DIRECT ALL ASPECTS OF THE RE-ORGANISATION AND OVERSEE ITS IMPLEMENTATION. THE BRANCH HAS A STATUS EQUAL TO ALL OTHER BRANCHES AT ARMY OFFICE.

- RECRUITING ADVERTISEMENTS ARE ALREADY USING THE NEW TITLE "ARMY RESERVE". THERE IS, OF COURSE, THE NEED FOR LEGAL CHANGE TO GIVE FULL EFFECT TO THIS NEW TITLE.

- A CHANGE IN THE CLOTHING ENTITLEMENTS FOR THE ARMY RESERVE HAS NOW BEEN APPROVED. THIS NOW PUTS THE ARMY RESERVE ON A COMPARABLE BASIS WITH THE REGULAR ARMY.

MR BARNARD REFERRED THE QUESTION OF PAY FOR THE RESERVES OF ALL THE SERVICES TO THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE FOR DEFENCE FORCE PAY, AN INDEPENDENT BODY UNDER THE JUDICIAL CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR JUSTICE COLDHAM. A RECOMMENDATION HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE THOUGH IT IS EXPECTED SHORTLY. HOWEVER, AS A MEANS OF IMMEDIATELY IMPROVING THE RESERVE CONDITIONS SALARIES WERE INCREASED BY 12 PER CENT AS FROM 1 JULY 1974.

THE MILLAR REPORT ACKNOWLEDGED THE RECENT WIDENING OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN MEMBERS TO SERVE IN THE RESERVE AND RECOMMENDED FURTHER RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS AS CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOWED. STEPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY THE ARMY IN THIS DIRECTION INCLUDING:-

- (A) THE RESTRICTION OF ENLISTMENT OF WOMEN WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN HAS BEEN REMOVED.
- (B) THE RECOMMENDATION THAT AGE LIMITATIONS ON ENLISTMENTS, DISCHARGE, AND COMMISSIONING FOR WOMEN SHOULD BE THE SAME AS FOR MEN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS CHANGES TO STATUTORY REGULATIONS CAN BE MADE. FOR INSTANCE, THE MINIMUM AGE FOR COMMISSIONED RANK WILL BE 18½ YEARS (CURRENTLY IT IS 21 YEARS FOR WOMEN, 18½ FOR MEN).

(c) APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN FOR WOMEN TO USE FIREARMS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THEIR HEAD OF CORPS. AN ARMY TRAINING INSTRUCTION IS CURRENTLY IN PRINT AUTHORISING THIS MATTER.

EARLY NEXT YEAR WE EXPECT TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE MILLAR COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREFERENTIAL HOUSING LOANS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMY RESERVE WHO SERVE SIX YEARS OR MORE.

THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF AN ALL VOLUNTEER ARMY. IT RECOGNISES THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE SUCH A FORCE MUST HAVE HIGH MORALE, HIGH DEGREE OF MOTIVATION AND SUITABLE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE. IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ACHIEVE THIS BY ALL THE MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL.

I BELIEVE THAT A GREAT MAJORITY OF EMPLOYERS ARE PATRIOTIC AND PUBLIC-SPIRITED. I APPEAL TO THEM TO ADOPT AND PROMULGATE POLICIES WHICH WILL BE HELPFUL TO THE ARMY RESERVE AND THE NATION. IN PARTICULAR AN EMPLOYEE WILL REQUIRE HIS EMPLOYER'S PERMISSION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL CAMP WHICH IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE YEARLY TRAINING CYCLE. HOPEFULLY, EMPLOYERS WILL WISH TO FOLLOW THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY - WHICH IS, TO GRANT EMPLOYEES LEAVE WITH PAY TO ATTEND ANNUAL CAMPS.

WE WANT TO SEE A RESERVE BACKED BY THE COMMUNITY OF WHICH IT IS PART AND WHICH IT IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT AND PROTECT.