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THE WEEK AT HOME

By MAX NEF.

A comprehensive Report has been drawn up by the Federal Military Department on the question of the Reorganisation of the Army, and has been submitted to the Federal Government. In view of the fact that the newly elected member of the Government, Professor Wahlen only took up his duties at the beginning of February, the Government waited until its quorum was complete before proceeding to deal with this important business, in the domain of national military defence.

When the Government entrusted the experts on military questions with the task of studying the problem of the modernisation of the Army, it also added some directives: The mobility of the Army should be increased, which would, of course, lead to greater mechanisation. Then the firing power must be increased by means of new or more modern weapons. Also, a further extension of fortifications should be taken into consideration.

Whatever the solution may be which will prove effective in the end, new problems are bound to arise in the field of Army reform, training and equipment. Finally, the presumable financial consequences must also be stated, the extent of which depends naturally to a large degree on the scale on which these innovations are carried out and the time allotted for their execution.

In any case, it would appear to be an established fact that the requirements in personnel for the Army will be smaller than the present strength available. The present high figure for the strength of the Army is due to the fact that just before the outbreak of the Second World-War, and then during the period of Active Military Service itself, the obligatory period during which all able men were bound to carry out their national service was extended from 48 to 60 years of age. To-day, however, it is realised that the forementioned reform will cut down the requirements in personnel. To this must be added the fact that during the next few years there will be a considerably larger number of young men available as recruits, so that, year by year, about one-third more trained soldiers will be incorporated in the Army than was the case during the previous decade.

Thus, it will now prove possible to reduce the age up to which military service is obligatory. As to how many trained and experienced servicemen belonging to the "Landsturm" age group (*i.e.* men over 45 years of age) can be exempted from military service will depend on the plan decided upon for the reorganisation of our National Defence. As soon as the Federal Government and Parliament are agreed on the subject, it will be possible to calculate the requirements in Army personnel. It will thus also be possible to say at what age compulsory military service can be brought to an end. According to a rough estimate, it should be possible to reduce requirements by something like ten age-groups, but it is still too early to be able to give any exact figures.

The release of such a reserve in trained and experienced servicemen is all the more urgently desirable, in that the building up of a really effective organisation for Civil Defence will need a numerous

personnel. Moreover, these men are also required for organisations connected with war economy, and also for the country's economy, in general. Many a branch of production cannot be allowed to lie fallow, it is indispensable for the provision of the Army and of the people. So-called *Total* National Defence needs a large number of expert and capable persons to carry on outside the Army itself, in order that all the Defence organisations should constitute and guarantee jointly the effectiveness and strength of the National Defence.

PREMIERE IVRESSE.

Lorsque le doux zéphir du soir
Caresse les feuilles verdâtres,
Que, sur les monts, les jeunes pâtres
Se sentent ranimer d'espoir ;
Lorsque le gazon parfumé
Répand ses senteurs énivrantes,
Que les petites étoiles blanches
Baignent le monde de clarté,
Le cœur tresaille d'allégresse.

Aux joies premières du printemps
Le cœur avide se désaltère,
Le visage attristé s'éclaire
Sous les regards du firmament.
Tout bas l'enfant voluptueux,
De sa bouche aimable et craintive,
Balbutie une chanson plaintive ;
Et c'est sous la beauté des cieux
Qu'il ressent sa première ivresse.

M.M.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 10th April 1959. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donation over and above their subscription: E. Rietmann, M. Weber, J. Schweiwiller, A. C. Baume, Alfred F. Frikart, Mrs. H. Ellison.



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