

# The Sword of The Spirit In 2nd N.Z.E.F.

## Chaplains' Department Leadership School.

(By the Rev. R. Morris, C.F.)

A few months prior to the cessation of hostilities in Italy a School of Moral Leadership was set up in Rome under the auspices of the R.A.F. with the object of giving men serving in that force the opportunity of learning something more about the Christian Faith and its relationship to life.

To this course one of our Chaplains, the Rev. E. O. Sheild, was sent as an observer. As a result of the report he made to the S.C.F. on the value of the school, it was unanimously decided by the New Zealand Chaplains Department, with the full approval and encouragement of the G.O.C., Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard C. Freyberg, to establish a school on similar lines for the 2nd N.Z.E.F. It is regretted that the Roman Catholics have not yet seen their way clear to participate in the scheme.

The first concern was to find a suitable building in which to hold the school. This was found in Riccione, a seaside holiday resort on the Adriatic, a few miles south of Rimini. For several months the Y.M.C.A. had been running a rest hostel in this town for our troops coming out of the line. A large and spacious hotel, complete with every modern convenience and amenity had been taken over for this purpose. This hostel was generously placed at the disposal of the Chaplains' Department by the Y.M.C.A., which undertook to be responsible for the catering and general material welfare of the school; and it is no exaggeration to say that the comfort and atmosphere of peace, quiet and freedom from military restraint which men find there has contributed considerably to the success of the school.

### Application to Everyday Life.

In the words of the official prospectus: "The School is open to all officers and other ranks of 2 N.Z.E.F., and its object is to train leaders by providing them with a background of Christian teaching and showing how it can be applied to everyday life. The guiding principle of selection of students is potential leadership, and for this reason it is felt that preference should be given to applicants other than ordinands."

Four Chaplains have been seconded to the School as permanent tutors

—the Rev. E. O. Sheild and the Rev. H. F. Harding, Church of England, and the Rev. H. S. Scott and the Rev. J. S. Somerville, Presbyterian. The Rev. E. O. Sheild acts as principal.

There is accommodation for 60 men at a course, which lasts ten days—20 lectures are delivered by the tutors during that time.

The syllabus is comprehensive, but can be summed up under three main headings—

- (1) The foundations and fundamentals of leadership.
- (2) The dynamic at work in history.
- (3) The application of leadership.

Under the first heading lectures are given on the necessity of belief in God, on the nature of man, and on God's revelation of Himself to man in the person of His Son, in the Bible and in history.

The second series of lectures deal chiefly with the history of the Church and the necessity of worship, with special reference to forms of worship, while the third embraces lectures on sex, education, politics and economics, the use of leisure and recreation and the application of leadership.

When in session the school is divided into four groups, each under the leadership of one of the Padres. These groups meet for group discussion of subjects relevant to the lectures given during the day, while in the evening there is an open forum for all, when the Chaplain-Tutors answer written questions which have previously been handed in.

### Feature of the School.

A feature of the school is that it is run on denominational lines—two C. of E. courses to one Presbyterian and one O.D. course, based on the proportional representation of each denomination in the 2nd N.Z.E.F.

In these days one reads a good deal of how the war has broken down the barriers of denominationalism. If by this is meant that the war has resulted in a better and more sympathetic understanding of the position and point of view of other denominations, it is a good thing.

But if it is meant that the attempt has been made to arrive at some lower common denominator in teaching and worship, it is a bad thing and can only result in a spineless and anæmic form of belief and worship. The Chaplains of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. felt that the best interests of religion and churchmanship would be served by conducting the courses on denominational lines and allowing each denomination to approach doctrine and history from its own standpoint, and worship according to its own forms—only so would a strong and virile enthusiasm be engendered.

How well founded was their belief is apparent to anyone who has observed the school at work. The devotional life is the source from which the school derives its inspiration and dynamic. The C. of E. with its daily Eucharist and offices, the other denominations with their daily prayers and Bible study. The writer was present at Evensong on a recent Sunday when the full liturgical service of the Church, with its chants and psalms, its prayers and responses was rendered by a full congregation of 60 men, providing an inspiration such as no other form of evening service could give. A similar inspiration was felt by a Presbyterian padre when he attended one of the services of his Church, with its metrical psalms and challenging address.

### Men from Waiapu.

Several men from the Waiapu Diocese have already attended the school, namely: Captain H. M. B. De Lautour, Lieutenant A. T. Harvey, 2nd-Lieutenant L. G. Sefton, all of Wairoa; Lieutenant I. Logan and 2nd-Lieutenant D. W. Harrison, both of Napier; 2nd-Lieutenant A. Balzar and Private V. J. Caudwell, both of Rotorua; Sergeant E. W. Findlay, Gisborne; Sergeant J. R. Monteith, Waipukurau; Private W. F. W. Tucker and Private E. Ward, both of Hastings; Private G. Walker, Tiki-tiki.

And what of the hopes and aspirations of the school? Many men who have attended one or other of the courses have said that they have come away with a new conception of their faith and of its relevance to the everyday life of the world. It is hoped that these men will go back to their batteries and battalions, to their hospitals and workshops imbued with the desire to stimulate in the minds of their associates a like enthusiasm and a like desire to know something more about what Christianity has to offer.

### The Greatest Test.

But perhaps the greatest test of the work of the school will come when men return to New Zealand, to