

TO YOU PERSONALLY.

One of the main attractions about the subjects selected by A.E.W.S. for the weekly Current Affairs discussions is that the problems ARE current, and that developments in these fields occur continually and are reported in the daily press. In some cases (but they are still too few) soldiers realise this. Such remarks are heard as: "I never realised what was going on in China till we had a talk about it; now I seem to notice the cables about China more often." This remark, admittedly, is reminiscent of the familiar ads.: "I never knew what really WHITE linen was, till I used Washo!" But it was actually spoken to the writer by a member of an army discussion group.

In still too many cases, however, the groups regard the subjects as "static" rather than "current" affairs. As discussion closes, there is a feeling that anyhow **that's** finished, and we can wait to see what the next subject will be. You haven't finished with the subject when the discussion hour closes. Even if you refuse to think any more about the problem discussed, it goes on developing, badly or well, in the world outside the camp. A slightly more careful reading of the daily press ought to convince you of that. So one of the purposes of this page each month will be to draw your attention to these developments—to help you realise that these problems are very much "current."

The other purpose will be to tell you how discussion has gone in some of the units. Perhaps news from camps where discussion has been successful and enjoyed by all, will help those where it hasn't been so good.

In both jobs, soldier, **we want your help!** Listen! —

First, no one man can watch **all** the news in the papers. Overseas periodicals frequently print new information on the problems we discuss in AEWS groups. When you notice something of this kind that's interesting send it in.

Second, you fellows in the camps are most often the only ones who can give us the dinkum oil on the direction your discussion took. AEWS staff can be present at only a small percentage of the discussions in any one camp. So send us news of your own activities too. This page in future "Guerillas" is over to you.

A SIDELIGHT.

Staff Officer earnestly discussing the Current Affairs scheme with the whole unit, including the Major. Arrives at the point where he implores the men to say what subjects they would like the Bulletins to discuss. Interval of silence, then a spate of suggestions. Finally very serious staff-sergeant gets to his feet.

"Dunno if I can make myself clear sir, but I'd like some discussion on Man and the Universe. I mean—er—where do we come from? Er—what's my relation to the world? In fact—er—what AM I?"

More silence. His glance falls on the Major.

"And—er—what are YOU?"

The Major jumps to his feet and glares hurriedly round the assembly. "Seven days' C.B.," he snaps, "for the man who answers that question!"

POPULATION PROBLEMS.

Remember you discussed that in the early days? Of course, the problem hasn't stood still. You may remember that the Bulletin (No. 2) showed a general decline in the birth rate, as well as in the rates of natural increase and of net reproduction. There had been a slight recovery around 1940, but students of population change put this down as the usual result of the impact of war, and few were hopeful that the upward

Of course, you mustn't attach too much importance to figures for just separate quarters of the year. Even so there is cause for uneasiness. To begin with, there were 135 fewer marriages, which doesn't promise well for the future birth rate. There will be compensations, of course, when single men from overseas return and marry. But the number of births has dropped by 274. The number of deaths has also dropped; but only by 33. As was pointed out in many of the groups in NMD, the death rate can't go on falling. People must die some time or other, and if better medical care succeeds in postponing death awhile for many of them, no one can avoid it, and there must later be a rise in the death rate. Since the Bulletin on Population was published, a Press statement by the N.Z. Government statistician has underlined the problem. "It had to be remembered that the population of the Dominion was getting older, and there was a general upward tendency in the death-rate."

Figures in the same statement showed the upward tendency of death, and the downward tendency of birth-rate:

	Total Births	Total Deaths
1941	35100	15146
1942	33678	16386

Even if you didn't continue to think about it other people **did**, and their views were duly published.

The Leader of the Opposition stated in Kaitiā that he would aim at doubling the population by immigration within ten or fifteen years after soldiers had been re-habilitated. That would mean immigration at a rate of 2,000 a week for fifteen years, or 3,000 a week for ten years. Ever stopped to think what it would mean to transport 3,000 people a week here, for all of ten years, and find work for them? Even that would give us only a few more than 3,000,000 people at the end of the period. Mr. Nash, at almost the same time, stated that our natural resources were sufficient for a population of some 6,000,000. You can work out for yourself the rate per week necessary to achieve that figure in say ten years. And finally, note our natural increase (births minus deaths) for 1942, and work out how long it will take us on natural increase alone to reach either 3,000,000 or 6,000,000. We offer no prize for the first correct answer, but we **would** like to hear from you about it



"Man outside wants to know if he can interest you in a house-painting refresher course or something."
—by Neb.

trend would be maintained. Of course, it hasn't been. The New Zealand Press in April gave some of the relevant figures. Here they are. They compare the first quarter of this year with the first quarter of last year.

	Marriages	Births	Deaths
1st quarter, 1942	714	1156	599
1st quarter, 1943	579	882	566

DEVELOPMENTS IN CHINA

There has been an avalanche of short and very disjointed cables about the fronts in China since you discussed "China at War." It has been difficult to piece them together to form