

ENEMY ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL SHIPS

British Policy Stated

ITALIAN VESSEL TO BE USED

In consequence of many enemy attacks on British hospital ships, the British Government has decided to detain the Italian hospital ship Ramb IV, which was intercepted off Aden. The Government will use it for a minimum period of six months to replace a British ship damaged by enemy action.

Following is the text of a declaration made by the British Government stating its policy following a protest to the German Government against deliberate attacks on hospital ships:—

"On July 12, 1940, His Majesty's Government protested to the German Government through the United States against 31 deliberate and flagrant attacks by aircraft and shore batteries upon British hospital ships and carriers. Many of these were severely damaged and three, the Maid of Kent, Brighton and Paris, were sunk. All these sinkings and at least half of the other attacks occurred in broad daylight. All the ships concerned were marked in accordance with the Hague Convention and in all other respects fully conformed to the requirements of that convention.

"In spite of this protest enemy aircraft continued deliberately to disregard the immunity which is recognized by all civilized nations as due to hospital ships and our hospital ships continued to be attacked from the air in circumstances which leave no doubt as to the wilful and brutal nature of the attacks.

"The Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, recently reported three deliberate attacks on British hospital

ships. On April 12 the hospital ship Vita, with over 400 casualties aboard, was deliberately bombed by enemy aircraft and badly damaged. She was again attacked on April 21 and 22 while at sea and in tow. On May 5 the hospital ship Karapara was deliberately bombed and damaged by at least nine enemy aircraft at Tobruk. On May 17 the hospital ship Aba was twice deliberately bombed in the open seas 50 miles south of Crete and damaged. All these vessels were clearly marked in accordance with the Hague Convention and all the attacks took place in broad daylight when there can be no question of difficulty of identification. Deliberate attacks are also known to have been made on Greek hospital ships.

"His Majesty's Government is not prepared to tolerate such flagrant violations of the convention, which received the signature and approval of the German and Italian Governments and from which these Governments, by marking their vessels in accordance with its requirements, expect to derive full advantage.

"His Majesty's Government has, therefore, given directions that the Italian hospital ship Ramb IV, which was intercepted after the fall of Masawa and sent in for examination in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Hague Convention, is to be detained and employed as a hospital vessel for the transport of British and enemy sick and wounded. His Majesty's Government will detain the Ramb IV for use as stated above for a minimum period of six months in replacement of one of those damaged by the enemy's wilful action.

"If in the meantime His Majesty's Government is satisfied that the enemy not only has the firm intention of refraining from further attacks on British hospital ships but also has the power to ensure that these intentions are carried into effect, the return of the Ramb IV will be considered."

RACING FIXTURES.

July 8, 10, 12—Wellington R.C.

July 19—Manawatu Hunt.

July 19—Waimate District Hunt Club.

AFTER MILITARY SERVICE

Civil Reinstatement

ALLEGED BREACHES INVESTIGATED

Sixty-seven cases of alleged failure to reinstate workers in their employment at the termination of their military service or during leave without pay from military service have been investigated so far and a further 31 cases are now under action, according to a statement made yesterday by the Minister of Labour, Mr. Webb. The Minister said he was pleased that employers generally had complied with the provisions of the Occupational Re-establishment Emergency Regulations, which required them to reinstate their workers on the completion of military service, either in the Territories or overseas.

"Of the 67 cases investigated proceedings were taken in 14 cases," said Mr. Webb. "In eight of these convictions were recorded and six cases were dismissed or withdrawn for various reasons. Wages totalling £51/6/6 were ordered to be paid to workers. Fifty-three cases were dealt with by the department without recourse to Court proceedings, 22 by the reinstatement of the worker, and seven by other action (including payment of wages during period of unemployment). In the remaining 24 cases no action was taken for various reasons such as that no breach was disclosed, or that the worker requested that no action be taken."

"There were six cases in which employees had been dismissed within six months of their reinstatement in civil employment. In two cases the worker was reinstated on representations being made to the employer by the department. In the remaining four cases no action was taken, as it was considered that there had been no breach by the employer.

Dismissal Before Service.

"There were 14 complaints of workers having been dismissed before starting military service for the reason that the employers were attempting to avoid their obligations under the regulations. In one case Court proceedings were taken, but were dismissed on the ground that the action had not been brought within the statutory period. In one case the worker was reinstated. In another the worker desired no further action. In two cases alternative employment was found. Another case was settled by payment of wages. In two other cases the worker had been dismissed for good reason. In six cases no action was taken as no breach was disclosed.

"In addition to the cases I have quoted there are 31 cases now under action.

"It is possible that changes may have taken place rendering it impossible to reinstate a person after completion of his military service. The regulations provide for such cases. The department has carefully investigated any complaint of non-observance of the regulations and has endeavoured to remove any grievance without recourse to Court proceedings, as the statement I have given will show."

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