

PROBLEM OF THE "REJECTS"

UNSATISFACTORY POSITION

No one who follows the recruiting figures that are published daily in "The Argus" can help being concerned at the unusually large number of men who are rejected in proportion to those who pass. On Saturday 170 men were examined at the Town Hall depot, and only 02 were up to or over the standard. Last Wednesday only 65 passed out of a total offering of 141, and on the preceding Monday 192 volunteers yielded only 101 recruits. Nor are the figures from provincial centres any better. At Ballarat last Wednesday two men only were fit out of the 23 who volunteered. On the previous day 28 volunteers supplied eight recruits, and on the day before that again five men passed out of 25. Most of the figures for country depots are more favourable. For instance, at Wangaratta one reads of nine men passing out of ten offering, but other figures emphasise the grave discrepancy between the numbers offering and accepted. At the Mildura depot one day last week 18 men volunteered and only three passed.

It has frequently been stated of late that the large proportion of rejects is due to men who have previously been "turned down" applying over and over again for enlistment. Is this, however, the case? There are reasons for doubting that it is, but the authorities could settle it once and for ever by consulting the records. The men may, of course, give different names on different days, but it would only be necessary to take action in one such case to put an end to that. There seems to be nothing to prevent men from applying time after time for enrolment. That is not the point. If they are making repeated application the

would enable Great Britain and her Allies to enforce such terms of peace that another similar war would be impossible.

Mr. Tudor, in seconding the motion, said that he had worked in three countries—Britain, America, and Australia—and he knew what he was saying when he said that Australia was the brightest jewel in the world. In all Britain's possessions there was none to compare with it. What was more certain than that if, through lack of recruits, Germany were enabled by numbers to force England under, Germany would demand the possession of this glorious country. If the young men of Australia realised the seriousness of the position as he did, there would be no necessity to send out recruiting cards. On one card the writer said that he would enlist when all Germans in Australia were interned. This attitude was ridiculous. If some men were frightened at the harm the few Germans at liberty here could do them—and he could assure them that all such persons were more closely watched than was supposed in all their dealings—how much more frightened should they be of the German army of 10,000,000 men we were fighting in Europe?

The motion was carried amid cheers.

Lieutenant Fisher and Councillors S. Plowman, C. Murray, and George Keast also spoke. The meeting terminated with the singing of "Rule Britannia."

WORK OF COMMITTEES.

BRUNSWICK.

TWO RUSSIANS ENLIST.

There were not many applicants at the town hall. Up till late in the afternoon seven had put in an appearance, and the whole seven passed the doctor. Another man who passed the doctor declined to be sworn in, as he thought that single men should go first. The recruiting officer (Lieutenant Green) points out that it is

should go first. The recruiting officer (Lieutenant Gregg) points out that it is pure waste of time for men to come forward when they do not intend to go, even if found medically fit. Two Russians (Bertil Arbid Sandstrom and Paul Adamson) were amongst the seven volunteers who passed. The number of replies to the enlistment circular in the direct affirmative was 301, of which 128 were from married men and 173 from bachelors. Those willing to enlist later on numbered 86, of whom 26 were married and 59 single. Those on active service numbered 454.

HAWTHORN.

Arrangements have been completed by the Hawthorn Recruiting Committee to hold a public meeting in the town hall on Wednesday, February 2, at 8 p.m., when addresses will be delivered by Sir W. H. Irvine, M.H.R., the leader of the State Opposition (Mr. George Elmslie), and Father J. O'Dwyer, S.J. The mayor of Hawthorn (Councillor Percy J. Russell) will preside.

HEIDELBERG.

Cards are still being received at the Heidelberg Shire Hall. The analysis is as follows:—Willing to enlist at once, 168; later, 84; already enlisted, 188. Sergeant W. St. Vincent Moody, of the 8th Light Horse, who was wounded two days before the gallant charge of that regiment, has been appointed to assist Sergeant Kerr.

MALVERN.

Amongst the speakers at the recruiting meeting to be held to-night in the Malvern Town Hall are Senator Russell, Mr. Arthur Robinson, M.L.C., the Rev. Father O'Dwyer, and Mr. A. T. Strong. The mayor (Councillor A. J. Weller) will preside. A procession will be held, and the Prahran-Malvern Tramway Trust will run a decorated car over its lines. Provision has been made for an overflow meeting in the cricket ground.