

Enclosure.

National War Museum, H.M. Office of Works, Storey's Gate,
Westminster, S.W.1, 12th April, 1917.

SIR,—

The enclosed leaflet is being widely circulated throughout the Navy and the Army. I am instructed by the National War Museum to ask that the attention of the Governors of the Dominions and colonies in all parts of the British Empire may be called to it, and that it may be sent to them with a covering letter pointing out as follows :—

- (1.) That the National War Museum will be very incomplete if it does not illustrate both by documents and material exhibits the war activities of all parts of the British Empire, as well as of British subjects resident in foreign countries.
- (2.) That enemy propaganda has been a very widespread phenomenon, and that the evidences of it from all parts of the world will form an important contribution towards the material to be handled by future historians.
- (3.) That files of important or characteristic journals covering the period of the war will be a valuable contribution to the museum library, as well as all books, pamphlets, and other publications dealing with the war, or with economic or other conditions arising out of it.
- (4.) That illustrative photographic material will be very acceptable.
- (5.) That a branch of the museum is to be devoted to the work of women for the war.
- (6.) That the formation of local committees in as many centres as possible to co-operate with the museum authorities may be a good way to further this patriotic movement.

I am, &c.,

MARTIN CONWAY,

Director-General, National War Museum.

To the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Downing Street.

NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM.

THE War Cabinet has accepted the proposal of Sir Alfred Mond (First Commissioner of Works), to establish a museum in London commemorative of the war. The needful preliminary steps having been taken and a nucleus organization set up, it is necessary to obtain the co-operation of every member of the fighting Forces of both services at the earliest possible moment. Only by such co-operation can the desired result be attained. His Majesty the King has been pleased to express his sympathy with the proposed War Museum, and he trusts that it may be made thoroughly representative of the achievements of all units engaged in the war, both in the combatant and non-combatant services.

The museum, beside in the first instance illustrating as fully as possible the operations of the Navy all over the world and of the Army on all fronts, will be so arranged as to set forth the activities and accomplishments of the several units, and special attention will be paid to the record of ships and regiments. There will be sections devoted to the Forces of each of the Dominions. There will also be a section illustrative of women's work.

By private and public initiative similar enterprises have been set on foot in allied and in enemy countries. It is not desirable that the historian of the future should have to go abroad to pursue his studies in German museums through lack of material provided at home. The length of time that has already passed since the beginning of the war, and the consequent transfer into private hands of countless memorials of priceless value for the future, render the generous co-operation of such owners essential. This is specially true in respect of documents of all kinds. Life on shipboard and in the trenches produces a transient literature and art of its own. The museum should possess all the ship and trench magazines, journals, poems, popular songs, characteristic private letters, writings, sketches, caricatures, maps, and so forth. The Admiralty, the War Office, and the Ministry of Munitions will deposit in the museum the large mass of official exhibits, but such an assemblage will be a dead accumulation unless it is vitalized by contributions expressive of the action, the experiences, the valour, and the endurance of individuals. The brave men who have performed heroic deeds, and too often laid down their lives for their country in the performance, must be commemorated by their portraits. The photographic record of persons and places must be as complete as possible.

Much that would have been of great value to the national collection is already destroyed; more is in imminent peril of destruction. A general co-operation is needed to preserve everything that can be saved. Models of particular parts of the front are made to serve the needs of the day and cast aside when they have performed their purpose. Every one of them is wanted. Men employ their enforced leisure in making all kinds of memorials; gifts of such representative souvenirs will be valued. The light side of things should be illustrated as well as the frightful tragedy of war.

When peace returns and men are back at home the years will pass and memory of the great days and adventures through which they lived will grow dim. It is the purpose of the museum to be a place which they can visit with their comrades, their friends, or their children, and there revive the past and behold again the great guns and other weapons with which they fought, the uniforms they wore, pictures and models of the ships and trenches and dug-outs in which weary hours were spent, or of positions which they carried and ground every yard of it memorable to them. They will then be glad to recall also the occupations of their hours of leisure. They will be able to look up the likenesses of the men they knew, some of whom, it may be, fell fighting beside them. The best possible result will be desired by all. Let all co-operate heartily and it will be attained.

MARTIN CONWAY,

Director-General of the National War Museum.

Temporary Offices, H.M. Office of Works, Storey's Gate, Westminster, S.W.1.