CHAPTER 1

EARLY DAYS

EDUCATION in the British Armed Forces is of respectable antiquity in the history of their professional development. For nearly two hundred years the Royal Navy and the Army have had schoolmasters to provide fundamental education as a foundation to more specialised military studies. In the Royal Air Force, the youngest of the Services, education has played an important role from the beginning.

In the Navy it was early the custom for a captain to include in the ship's company a number of young men destined to be naval officers, and these would receive instruction in subjects essential for efficiency on the quarter-deck. By the end of the seventeenth century the naval schoolmaster was directed to employ his time on board in instructing young officers in writing, arithmetic and navigation, and in teaching the rudiments to the other youths of the ship.

It is not surprising to find that the Army's interest in education was first concerned with that of the soldiers' children, for it was to them that the regiment would look for recruits to its ranks. In 1767 the Queen's Royal Regiment, if not exceptional, was at least outstanding in its concern for its children. A standing order of the Regiment contained these words:

> "A serjeant or corporal whose sobriety, honesty and good conduct can be depended upon, and that is capable of teaching writing, reading and arithmetic, is to be employed in the capacity of schoolmaster, where soldiers' children are to be carefully instructed."

Nor was the private soldier forgotten. The Napoleonic campaigns had meant rapid promotion for many of them and with it increased responsibility. Conditions had made it necessary for non-commissioned officers to undertake many of the administrative duties which normally devolved on the officers. In 1811 the Commander-in-Chief gave official support to a

system, already operating in some regiments, with which the name of Sir John Moore, particularly, has been linked. The Commander-in-Chief recommended that all commanding officers should establish schools for soldiers' children and for any of the men who wished to attend. A serjeant-schoolmaster was attached to each regiment. Instruction was based on the principles of the Reverend Andrew Bell, a former army chaplain who was later appointed educational adviser to the Commander-in-Chief.

Between 1743 and 1908 the Army founded three boarding schools for the sons of soldiers, the Duke of York's Royal Military School, the Queen Victoria School and the Royal Hibernian Military School. Of these the two former still exist. The Royal Military Academy and the Royal Military College were also established during the same period, and we thus have clear evidence of the increasing interest of the military authorities in education during these early years.

The Royal Navy provided for the education of ordinary ratings in 1837 by appointing the first seamen's schoolmasters. These were additional to, and distinct from, those who instructed the young officers. The seaman was taught reading, writing and arithmetic as well as elementary navigation to such a standard as to fit him for promotion to a higher rating.

As was to be expected, education in the Navy and Army received official support in the first instance because of its intimate connection with service efficiency. The same principle operated with regard to civil education. Although Lord Brougham's interest in the education of the masses was dictated by philanthropic motives, as was that of Kay-Shuttleworth and Robert Owen in the first half of the nineteenth century, others supported his ideas for more utilitarian reasons. The very senior officer who described a proposed regimental library as "an unnecessary and objectionable institution," and the commander who was convinced that literacy and bad behaviour went hand in hand, had their counterparts in Parliament when elementary education was being discussed in 1833. The idealist is rarely of the age in which he lives and there are few who possess both the ideals and the means of ensuring their acceptance. The Services have been fortunate in many of their

appointments, but rarely more so than when the Reverend R. C. Gleig became Inspector-General of Army Schools in 1844. Gleig was a product of Oxford and before taking Holy Orders had served as an infantry subaltern. His varied accomplishments and social connections were instrumental in gaining him the support of Sidney Herbert, the Secretary at War.

Until the appointment of Gleig army schoolmasters had been regimental soldiers, but in 1846 Herbert agreed to the formation of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters. The newly formed corps found in the Inspector-General an ardent champion and one who, by his own enthusiasm, infected its members with that vitality which made them such a force in the old Regular Army. Six years previously the schoolmistresses of the Army had also been granted official status.

Colonel I. H. Lefroy, who succeeded Gleig in 1857, was a man of similar calibre but different accomplishments. He was an administrator of a high order and as the founder of the Royal Artillery Institution was already well known to the Army. Lefroy expanded his department and ensured the efficient inspection of army schools by appointing regimental officers and some of His Majesty's Inspectors of Schools to the military inspectorate. He fought continuously for an improved status for the army schoolmaster and succeeded to a limited extent.

Although the appointment of Inspector-General was abolished in 1860, we remember these men as two of the doughtiest fighters for education in the Army.

The year 1860 also marks the inauguration of the system of certificates for educational proficiency in the Army. At first these were issued on a regimental basis and were not supported by everyone, but in 1871 the certificates were made an integral part of the educational system. The Fourth Class Certificate was abolished in 1887.

The first world war brought a great development of adult education in the Services. At a very early date attempts were made to meet the educational opportunities and responsibilities created by the mobilisation of the nation's youth. These efforts —with which the names of Lord Kitchener and Sir Robert Blair must be associated—failed in themselves because of the

vastness of the problem and the preoccupation of the authorities with the absolutely essential business of fighting the war. But it was a noble failure, and at home led to considerable work with young recruits which by 1917 achieved the dignity of an organised scheme. It is interesting to note that the War Office not only encouraged this work but allowed it to develop on its own lines, so that in some areas there was a bias towards the vocational and technical and in others towards education of a general character.

Both at home and in France educational work was begun by the military authorities for the benefit, and in many cases at the request, of the men. These beginnings, independent of one another, were motivated by ideas from the common experience of close relationship with men on whom the war was beginning to press with serious monotony. Into this work the Young Men's Christian Association entered with enthusiasm, and at first education took the form of lectures to the troops delivered under the auspices either of the training branches or of the Association. The isolated lecture became increasingly popular and gradually developed into longer courses of more serious educational value. In contrast to the use of propaganda in the educational system of the German army, which was directed to the forming of a desired (and usually erroneous) opinion, propaganda in the British Services was rigidly barred and the lecturers devoted themselves exclusively to work of a truly educational character with a complete absence of bias in presentation. The same differences between the British and the German methods were observed in the recent war.

By 1918, with the personal support of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Haig, a definite scheme of education had been drawn up with the twofold object of (a) giving the men a wider view of their duties as citizens of the British Empire, and (b) of helping them in their work after the war. This was done at a time when the great German onslaught was imminent. Education thus initiated during a period of crisis struck its roots deep in the Army, the parallel developments in France and the United Kingdom were brought together, and the whole scheme was co-ordinated by a Central Committee at the War Office. At this stage Lord Gorell, who had been intimately associated

with the work from the beginning, was sent to the War Office and from then on was the focal point of the whole scheme. His devoted work, with the support of Lord Milner and General Lynden-Bell, led to the vast expansion of education during the demobilisation period.

There is here no space in which to describe with justice the vast ramifications of the work during this period. It must suffice to quote the words of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, then President of the Board of Education: "I do not think there has ever been in the whole history of education of this world an educational experiment conducted on so large a scale."

The work was irregular in incidence and effect, as it was bound to be, but directly or indirectly the movement influenced in one way or another many hundreds of thousands of citizen soldiers; it played a considerable part in the resettlement in civil life of the youth of the Empire, and it has left its mark permanently upon military thought.

Lord Gorell was implementing his scheme at a time when the Fisher Act of 1918 was beginning to establish a comprehensive system for the children of the country. Between 1919 and 1920, with the support of many senior officers who were quick to appreciate the value of the experiment, the decisive influence of Gorell led to the formulation of an educational policy for the peace-time Regular Army. At this time the Army's system of examinations was completely reorganised; in 1920 was formed the Army Educational Corps, which from then on became the main instrument of the Army's education.

In 1919 the following significant paragraph, which is as true to-day as it was then, appeared in a War Office policy letter and indicates the spirit of the approach to the problem:

> "Commanding officers must realise that the recruit who is entrusted to them at the age of 17 or 18, has in the course of his service with the colours to be made not only an efficient soldier, but also an educated man, a good citizen, and competent workman. Education must no longer be a side-show and vocational training the hobby of a few commanding officers. It must in future be as integral and as permanent a part of the scheme of military work as physical training or musketry."

This passage could equally well have formed part of a memorandum issued by the Admiralty or the Air Ministry at the time. The latter indeed expressed as a main purpose of the Air Force Scheme that of providing " education in a wider sense tending to raise the level of general intelligence and to develop those qualities of mind and character which go to form an efficient disciplined force under modern conditions " (King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions). That their education schemes should differ in detail was a consequence of recruiting and training differences in the three Services. The general attitude behind them was, however, the same. It was believed that education contributed to the efficiency of the man as a sailor, soldier or airman, and it was hoped that the period spent in the Services would not be without benefit to the man himself. Indeed, a survey of the years 1920-1939 will give clear indications of the increasing concern which the Service Ministries showed in the education of the serving man and in the resettlement of those who had completed their term of engagement. In all Services, for instance, promotion to certain ranks depended on the attainment of an established educational standard. The Army pioneered in vocational training and started Army Vocational Training Centres early in the 1920's at Chisledon, Catterick, Hounslow and Aldershot. Staffed by the Army Educational Corps, these centres were highly successful, and were handed over to the Ministry of Labour at a later date. In some cases it was neither the incentive of promotion nor the preparation for civilian employment which stimulated the interest of the sailor, soldier or airman. There were many who, through the medium of the ship's or unit library, found a worthwhile interest in the study of literature, art or science. Dramatic societies and music circles, if not widespread, were by no means unknown in the Services between the wars. The padre, regimental officer and educational staff all co-operated to provide the serviceman with the facilities and amenities available to the normal civilian ; and the corporate life of ship or unit was in itself a valuable training-ground for citizenship.

The educational services of the Navy, Army and Air Force were reorganised after the first world war ; the differences which were then present still persist, and it will be convenient

to consider them briefly at this point. Originally the Navy possessed two grades—the Naval Instructor whose task was primarily the professional education of the officers, and the Schoolmaster who was responsible for the instruction of the ratings. These two categories are now merged as Instructor Officers in the same branch under the Director of the Education Department. The original education staff of the Royal Air Force were civilians of graduate status employed by the Air Ministry. On the outbreak of the war in 1939 the members were granted emergency commissions in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and shortly after the cessation of hostilities they were formed into the Education Branch of the Royal Air Force with full officer status.

In all three Services education officers are concerned with both general and technical education, but in very different degrees. In the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force the technical work predominates; the reverse is the case in the Army. The reasons for this will be examined in subsequent chapters, but generally speaking they are the higher educational standard of the entrants to the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force consequent upon the greater complexity of their machines of war. Only in the Army are non-commissioned officers employed on educational duties as a permanent part of the education service, although in the other two Services ratings and airmen have been seconded to this work from time to time to a limited extent.

The qualifications demanded of both the permanent and the short service officers in all three Services are similar—a degree, or recognition by the Ministry of Education as a qualified teacher. The Army, however, recruits instructors of non-commissioned rank as members of the Royal Army Educational Corps, and most of the teaching is undertaken by these serjeants and warrant officers.

In each of the three Services a Director is responsible, under the appropriate member of the Board of Admiralty, the Army Council and the Air Council respectively, for directing and co-ordinating the various aspects of educational work. The Directorates operate very similarly in the manner of, and according to the characteristics of, their respective Departments

of State, and there are arrangements for inter-Service discussions, which will be considered later.

In 1939 the imminence of war led to the formation of the Militia on the basis of universal national service. Detailed plans were made for the individual education of the militiaman, but before they could be brought into operation war broke out. Much ground had, however, been prepared for the educational developments of 1940.

The beginning of the war caused some curtailment of education throughout the Services. The amount of general instruction in H.M. ships was inevitably somewhat reduced, but the educational provision in shore establishments was only slightly modified. Compulsory general education for men in the Army virtually ceased in 1939, although evacuation to the country caused little serious decline in the standards maintained in the military schools for boys. In the Royal Air Force, the General Education Scheme was suspended.

With the exception of the Instructor Branch of the Royal Navy, which is an integral part of the fighting organisation of the Fleet, personnel of the educational services were diverted to one form or another of operational duty. Some remained in these appointments throughout the war, but the renewal of educational activity on a general scale in the autumn of 1940 brought most of them back to their proper work.

The educational experience of the first world war, and the intense interest of the nation in the general welfare of its armed forces, expressed themselves in many ways through devoted organisations and individuals both inside and outside the Services. This activity, in connection with which it is perhaps not invidious to mention the Young Men's Christian Association, Sir Walter Moberly and Dr. Basil Yeaxlee, led to the formation on January 6th, 1940, of the Central Advisory Council for Education in His Majesty's Forces, which is considered a little later in this chapter. This body was representative of almost every organisation in the country engaged in adult education, and it placed practically their entire resources at the disposal of the Services from then on. It is outside the scope of this work to go into the detail of the outstanding services of this body and its constituent organisations and

individuals. It must suffice to say that, in the opinion of the writer, this movement, as it may be called, was one of the most significant brought about by the war ; it had a far-reaching effect on hundreds of thousands of men and women who were otherwise lost to education.

In March 1940 the War Office set up the Haining Committee with terms of reference : " to investigate and report to the Secretary of State on the Educational, Welfare and Recreational needs of the Army and to make any necessary recommendations."

Sir Robert Haining as General Officer Commanding, Western Command, had shown himself deeply interested in the education of his troops. The report was presented to the Army Council on May 7th, 1940, three days before the launching of the German offensive. It recommended that the demand for education should be a matter of natural growth and that any scheme should be on a voluntary basis. The demands were to be met from the Army itself, the resources of the Central Advisory Council, technical schools, local education authorities and correspondence courses. It also recommended the appointment of a Director of Army Education " with wide sympathies and considerable experience of educational administration."

The evacuation from France created a unique situation for the Army. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force continued to be fully engaged in their respective operational roles but the Army had to re-form completely and initially without equipment. To some extent the problems of the Army had their counterpart in the other two Services and were dealt with, as will be seen, in a similar manner. In so far as they concern education, the first of these problems was the urgent necessity of maintaining morale. This was never low, but there was the danger that without active operations it might decline. Questions of low morale never arise in a British army which is engaged in active operations. The instinct of self-preservation no less than the incentive of ultimate victory is a sufficient spur to purposeful activity, but an army on the defensive and conscious of deficiencies in equipment, unavoidable though they might be, can be the breeding-ground of rumour and fertile soil for enemy propaganda. The second problem was the

necessity of acquainting everyone of the cause for which they were fighting and the progress of the war on all fronts with its civilian or non-military background. The third was the discovery that the average man-at-arms had a surprisingly inadequate knowledge of his own country's culture and way of life, both of which were at stake in the conflict.

To meet this situation the instruments were ready to hand, although they were brought into use spontaneously rather than by deliberate planning. The resources of the Central Advisory Council and the report of the Haining Committee were available to suggest measures which would foster morale. There is little doubt that the question of morale was uppermost in the minds of those who adopted and decided to implement the recommendations of the Committee. The idea of an evacuation and a beleaguered Britain can scarcely have influenced the conclusions offered by Haining, but it is safe to say that the report assumed a greatly enhanced significance once the issue of the Battle of France was decided.

The influence and work of the Central Advisory Council grew during the summer and autumn of 1940. Regional Committees, based on the extra-mural organisation of the universities and university colleges, and under the general control of the Central Advisory Council, supplied panels of civilian lecturers. It is this side of the Council's work which is best known to the general public, but in order to appreciate to the full the aid and advice which it gave to the Forces, it is necessary to consider briefly the relationship between civilian adult education and Services education prior to and during the early months of the second world war.

Lord Gorell had made great use of civilian educational resources during 1918 through the agency of the Y.M.C.A. Universities Committee, but between the wars the Services tended to be self-sufficient, and the civilians' share in their educational schemes was meagre. The Royal Navy and the R.A.F., it is true, did not rely entirely on Service personnel for staffing their schools and colleges, and personnel of the R.A.F. Educational Service were of civilian status ; but these staffs were specifically engaged by the Admiralty and Air Ministry and cannot be considered as examples of civilian assistance.

The rebirth of close liaison between the Services and the adult education organisations occurred in 1939 on the passing of the Military Service Bill. As in 1918 the Y.M.C.A. was closely associated with its early growth, but the Workers' Educational Association was also an active partner and before the end of 1939 it was possible to convene a conference representative of the Ministry of Education, the Universities and the main bodies providing adult education. It was on this occasion that the plans for the Central Advisory Council were made. One of the Council's first tasks was to obtain from the Service Departments a clear-cut policy on the provision and scope of adult education in the war-time Forces. Representations made to the Army had resulted in the appointment of the Haining Committee, and it seems reasonable to suggest that the Council acted in many ways as a clearing-house for the various proposals emanating from the Admiralty and Air Ministry.

During the summer and early autumn of 1940, invasion by the Germans seemed imminent and both military and civilian resources were mobilised to meet the threat. The approach of winter, however, provided an opportunity for stock-taking and thought, although it was generally realised tha tthe spring of 1941 would see the intensification of the enemy's efforts to subdue this country. The Royal Navy did not at once enlarge the scope of its education scheme, because the immediate survival of this country depended for a considerable time largely on its efforts. The Royal Air Force, although fully extended, did find time to develop again, to a modest degree, its General Education Scheme, while the Army completed its plan for the full implementation of the Haining proposals, issuing in September 1940 a pamphlet " Education in the War-time Army."

The year 1941 saw a great extension of the education scheme in the Army and to a smaller degree in the other two Services. The isolated lecture was preferred to the systematic course, and although this preference gave rise to some misgivings on the part of the Regional Committees which had been set up by the Central Advisory Council, it was realised that conditions in the Forces made it difficult to arrange lengthy series of lectures by outside speakers. Easier to organise were voluntary classes, for

which the instructors were found from within individual units. Handicrafts, music, languages and the commercial subjects were popular. It was in 1941 that a measure of education was made compulsory in young soldiers' battalions.

The second of the problems mentioned earlier, the requirement to inform and awaken the nation in uniform as to the full implication of the war, was solved in a manner which has left an indelible mark on educational technique.

Current affairs talks had been a feature of service life even before the formation of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs in the summer of 1941 and they were directed to the causes, background and progress of the war. The pressure for them came spontaneously both from the field and from the higher command and in the summer of 1941 the Army Council took the decision to form the Army Bureau of Current Affairs in order to develop this form of activity. Mr. W. E. Williams was appointed as Director ; stimulated by his genius in the presentation of current affairs, discussion groups became common in the Army, and eventually in all the Services, including the Dominion and United States Forces.

The actual work with the troops could not be undertaken by experts ; they were not available in sufficient number, and in fact it was not desirable to use them. The discussion group has a unifying influence ; the use of the regimental officer as the leader of discussion resulted not only in the dissemination of essential facts about the war but also in the welding together of officers and men. As a basis for discussion the Bureau issued two publications, " Current Affairs " and " War," in alternate weeks. The weekly period of discussion was compulsory, and it was the duty of the Army Educational Corps to foster and encourage this work of the regimental officer.

It is not an easy task to assess the amount and value of educational activity in the Services during 1940, 1941 and 1942. The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force continued to provide education fundamental to their technical subjects for their technical personnel and air-crews, but it is doubtful if the educational schemes for the normal rating and airman were as extensive in scope as the provision made by the Army for the broader education of the rank and file. This was, perhaps, an

inevitable consequence of the different roles which the three Services had to play. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the Army during these years was a hive of educational activity. The war on land in the Middle and Far East was causing a heavy drain on our manpower at home, training was becoming more intensive, and the use to which each hour was put was subject to a very close scrutiny. It is certain that some Commanding Officers were sceptical of the value to be derived from education, while others, if not openly antagonistic, were loth to spare much time and energy to matters which seemed to have little bearing on the immediate conduct of the war. Many commanders, however, particularly those of the pre-war regular army, by their enthusiasm and personal interest, proved that the education scheme was justified, and the War Office in September 1942 announced the first of the winter schemes in a War Office letter addressed to all Commands at Home. This scheme was notable because it marked the acceptance by the War Office of the principle of education during working hours in time of war. It also indicated quite clearly the content of the curriculum.

In addition to the current affairs period, the three hours which were to be spent each week on education allowed for one period on citizenship, and one on subjects calculated to make the man a better soldier ; the third was to be devoted to the education of the man as an individual. The soldier could elect to pursue during this third hour his own interest in language, art, music, science, or manual skill.

Citizenship is difficult to define, and the War Office was wise to avoid a formal definition and to leave the actual content of the course to spontaneous growth. Instead it sanctioned the distribution of the first of a series of booklets on the "British Way and Purpose" in October 1942. This and subsequent numbers were divided into four sections, each section containing sufficient material for one or more lectures. The entire series was, in fact, a text-book on citizenship. It was authoritative, topical, and comprehensive, yet not so diffuse as to be useless as a teaching syllabus. At a later date these booklets were collected into a single volume, and as such constituted one of the best text-books on citizenship yet produced in this

country. That this was the case is confirmed by the enormous demand for the work from civilian sources.

The winter scheme was given a further lease of life in 1943 and on this occasion General Sir Bernard Paget wrote in a letter to all his Commanding Officers :

> " The policy laid down in A.C.I.1566 of 1943 is one with which I am in full agreement. I wish the spirit of it to be observed throughout 21 Army Group. . . . Adult Education is not a " subject " suitable only for particular times and places. It is the sum of all the influences which can be exerted in making men into wiser and better men, and therefore into better soldiers. Thus defined, education is a process equally applicable to hours of duty and periods of leisure."

Sir Bernard Paget, the Bayard of the British Army, not only contributed materially to the development of education in the invasion forces and the Middle East but carried his enthusiasm into civil life as Principal of Ashridge College, where he succeeded in bringing to the civilian students, many of them his former soldiers, the same principles of citizenship in which he so staunchly believed as a Commander-in-Chief.

The Commanding Officers responded in their turn by giving the scheme a greater measure of support than they had found possible during the previous winter. The jeremiahs said that four hours of compulsory education would kill the voluntary scheme, whereas in the event there was a great increase in educational activity. There was a remarkable increase in the number and variety of voluntary activities and the regimental officers participated in the scheme both as instructors and students. Local education authorities and the public libraries, together with the Y.M.C.A. and other similar organisations, gave every assistance to the units stationed in the locality. In some areas the Army and R.A.F. pooled resources—quite unofficially—by establishing joint classes, debating societies or music circles. One found civilians and personnel of the Forces, both men and women, co-operating with members of the Civil Defence Services in dramatic societies, brains trusts or lectures. Great use was made of the correspondence course scheme which the Army inaugurated in 1940, and which by 1943 was open also to members of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

For ten shillings a year men and women were able to receive expert tuition by the staffs of the better known civilian correspondence colleges and from private tutors. The range of subjects was wide and the standard varied from the elementary to that of the intermediate examination for a degree.

The Army during 1943 made a determined attack on illiteracy, the incidence of which was made more apparent by the all-embracing character of national service. By 1944 each major command had established a Basic Education Centre where men backward in writing, reading and spelling received special training. The intakes of the other two Services were more selective, and the problem of illiteracy was very largely confined to the Army.

Current affairs and citizenship talks were already well-known features of the soldier's life, but until 1943 the Royal Navy and R.A.F. had found it difficult to make these two activities of universal application. During this year, however, discussion groups were formed in increasing numbers in both Services, and the R.A.F. issued the first number of " Target," a fortnightly journal dealing with current national, international and Service problems.

With various modifications, the Army winter scheme of Education and its counterpart in the Navy and Air Force continued until the implementation of the educational programmes for the release period in 1945. The invasion of Normandy in 1944 caused no curtailment of the work of the educational staffs. In fact they shouldered new responsibilities. The dissemination of news, the establishment of education centres, language teaching, and assistance with the rehabilitation of the wounded in hospitals were only four of the tasks which became increasingly the responsibility of the education officer in addition to his other duties. A complement of the Army Educational Corps sailed with the early convoys to the Normandy beaches; instructor-officers were, of course, in the warships which on June 6th stood off the coast of France, while their R.A.F. colleagues had their appropriate roles with the tactical Air Forces.

The Army Education Scheme for the Release Period and the corresponding Naval and R.A.F. Educational and Vocational

Training Schemes (E.V.T.) had already been prepared when the defeat of Germany became an accomplished fact. Although fundamentally similar, they differed in scope and, to some extent, in purpose. E.V.T. was aimed mainly at preparing men and women for their return to civil life and employment by providing them with opportunities for studying and understanding the problems of modern citizenship and for improving their qualifications for employment. In both the Navy and the Air Force the training was voluntary, except for one hour devoted to the study of citizenship. Commanding Officers were, however, required to allot up to five hours per week to the scheme during working hours for all personnel who desired to make use of it. The other educational activities which had been developed throughout the war were continued in both Services.

The R.A.F. Scheme was under way by the end of May. Instruction was in the main provided by a staff of nine thousand E.V.T. instructors. A vocational advice service was formed of officers who had received special training in giving guidance to men and women on the selection of a job, preparation for a profession, or further education.

Naval E.V.T. was not fully effective until the autumn of 1945 because the operational work of the Navy did not decrease until after the defeat of Japan. Similar in design and purpose to that of the R.A.F., the Navy's scheme was planned by the Education Department at the Admiralty. Instructor-officers and schoolmasters were in key positions during the implementation, but as E.V.T. developed a far greater number of officers and ratings were seconded from other branches to undertake the instruction.

The Army had planned somewhat differently, and no attempt was made to train men and women for specific jobs in industry or commerce owing to the many imponderables involved. Its scheme was general and pre-vocational in character, and based on work in the military unit. As in the R.A.F., owing to the almost infinite variety of circumstances of units all over the world, implementation was placed in the hands of local commanders, but once adopted in a particular unit it was compulsory for all individuals within it. A minimum six hours a week

were devoted to education : two to the compulsory subjects, citizenship and current affairs, and the rest to the subjects of the individual's own choice within the resources of the unit. There were six groups of subjects—technical, science, commerce, home and health, man and society, and arts, crafts, music and drama—for each of which curricula and method handbooks were provided, together with the relevant textbooks.

The work in units was supplemented where necessary by instruction of a more advanced character, provided at centres arranged on a territorial or " formation " basis and at residential colleges. In all three Services there were many remarkable examples of ingenuity in making provision for the infinite variety of instruction demanded. The colleges were located at home and overseas, and provided a residential course of one month's duration for persons able to profit from the instruction. About five per cent of the war-time army passed through these colleges. Thus, while the few who could make little or no effective use of the printed word continued to attend the Basic Education Centres, those whose educational standard was considerably in advance of that of the majority found in the newly established Formation Colleges opportunities for further study.

During the Release Period enrolments for correspondence courses were particularly heavy from all the Services. The Correspondence Course Handbook issued by the Army Council in October 1945 gives some indication of the variety of subjects provided under the Scheme. The student who was keen and able to apply himself to serious study could prepare for examinations leading to a professional qualification, or he could refurbish old skills prior to resuming his former civilian occupation. The correspondence course is not the mode of study for everyone, and many fell by the wayside. Many more, however, completed their courses and bridged the gap between service and civil life.

The use of the radio programme as a teaching aid is well known in civilian education, and in 1945 the British Broadcasting Corporation completed its plans for a series of programmes which would fit into the framework of the Services educational schemes. Experience had been gained during

the war in arranging special programmes for the Forces, and similar techniques were adopted by the B.B.C. in compiling the Forces Educational Broadcasts. The subject-matter used by each speaker supplemented the material contained in many of the syllabuses found in the curriculum handbooks, and a novel presentation often served to arouse flagging interest or to stimulate an enthusiastic class to even greater effort.

There are many who deplore and despise the man who spends his time collecting " academic luggage labels." Ideally, this attitude is right, but we have not yet reached the stage where our methods of assessing academic progress can be independent of the written test. It must also be recognised that the student himself derives no little satisfaction from attaining some generally recognised standard. There is, again, little doubt that many men and women in the Forces—especially the older ones—realised that their pre-war job was no longer the form of civilian employment they wished to resume on demobilisation. They were now more mature, and military service had given them an assurance and independence which made them anxious to succeed in life and often to strike out on a new line. Some found sufficient scope in jobs which demanded manual skill, but others looked to those occupations where a definite academic standard was required. The normal preliminary tests of professional bodies are not always appropriate for the candidate aged twenty-five or twenty-six, and those who brought about the Forces Preliminary Examination are to be commended for the skill they showed in making it suitable for the Service candidate and acceptable to a large number of professional organisations and to the Universities. The examination is still conducted by the Civil Service Commissioners, but changing conditions in the Services and recent modifications in the School Certificate may make a change of policy desirable.

No account of the work of the Services in this field would be complete without reference to the man who, above all others within the Services, was responsible for their educational developments during the war and demobilisation—General Sir Ronald Adam. As General Officer Commanding, Northern Command, his every action manifested his deep concern for his troops, and his far-sighted policies led to the establishment

of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs and to the education schemes for the release period.

During the release period the education schemes of the Services were welcomed by responsible officers and accepted with enthusiasm by the thoughtful among the rank and file. It is generally recognised that the excellent morale and discipline of the service man and woman during this period was in no small measure due to the purposeful and positive activity possible under the schemes.

Full implementation of the scheme was not possible and it was never envisaged. The Services had to depend on their own resources, as they could not compete for teachers with civilian educational organisations which had to repair the ravages of the war. The result was that the instructional staff in any one place was subject to constant change due to release, and could not always be replaced. Surprisingly, also, many units found that their " operational " roles were increased rather than reduced by the cessation of hostilities. This was due to the large areas which had to be occupied, and resulted in a conflict between education and the military task to the detriment of the former.

An immense amount of good and devoted work was, however, accomplished, and—dare it be said—particularly among those to whom the more usual methods of adult education make little appeal. It is in this field that the Services to this time had made their greatest contribution.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHANGING SCENE

BY THE BEGINNING OF 1946 the Services were feeling the effects of demobilisation, or "release" as it came to be called. The older men and women who had served during the war, and who formed a cross-section of the nation in age, experience and attainment, were leaving the Forces at an increasing rate, and their places were being filled by the extreme youth of the country. Nowhere was the lack of experience and maturity felt more than in the administrative branches and instructional cadres, and this at a time when skilled administration and instruction were most needed. The situation, of course, was symptomatic of the major readjustment which was being effected in the life of the nation. Energy and resources which hitherto had been directed to the prosecution of the war were now required to meet the equally urgent problems of peace and reconstruction. This position was accepted by the Services, but recognition of the problem was not a solution, and since 1946 the Service Ministries have been intensely occupied in trying to overcome the difficulties inherent in the acute shortage of skilled manpower.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that training programmes and the allocation of time should have been subjected to special scrutiny. The need for the utmost economy in the use of men made it extremely difficult for the Services to meet their major commitments for providing the occupation forces and for completing the aftermath tasks of the war. Training methods which had been appropriate in war-time required modification if the national service man with only eighteen months to serve was ever to approach in efficiency his older comrades, whose survival during the war had often depended on personal initiative and technical perfection in the use of weapons.

The release schemes of education which had been designed to prepare the sailor, soldier and airman for resettlement in civilian life were not entirely suitable for men whose military