THE FREE DANES ORGANISATION IN NEW ZEALAND (1942-46)

From the "Dansk Samvirke" came a request for a Summary of the activities of the Free Danes Movement, and we are pleased to record their activities although we realise that in New Zealand the Danes are few in number and scattered throughout the Dominion, therefore our effort must of necessity seem very small compared with the Home Front's great fight and sacrifice during the occupation. Yet in spite of our small number and limited opportunities, we were fired with that Danish spirit which compels one to fight for Truth! Light!! and Liberty!!!

Living in a free country, with freedom of speech and expression, there was ample scope for voicing the plight of the Danes and at the same time giving them our moral and material support.

A Danish patriot, Mr. Eli Dahl of Wellington, listening one evening in 1941 to the B.B.C. heard a Danish voice informing listeners to the formation of the Danish Council in London and calling all Danes the world over to unite in an effort to support the Allied Nations in their fight for freedom. He then called a meeting of Danes on February 8th, 1942 and thus was formed the Danish Association in New Zealand. Prior to this he had corresponded with the Danish Council in London and was in full accord with its objectives and Policy.

In his opening speech he pledged his support to the Free Danes Movement as outlined by the Council. An appeal to Danes for funds for a fighter plane for the Royal New Zealand Air Force, met with ready response.

Mr. Christoffer Langkilde of Auckland, who since the occupation of Denmark, had through the courtesy of the press regularly exposed the Nazi Propaganda which had filtered through, was approached by Mr. Dahl and asked to act as agent for the Auckland Province. As such he acted until June,1942, when, at Mr. Dahl's suggestion a meeting was called by Mr. Langkilde and a Branch was formed with the following Officers:-

President:	Mr. Christoffer Langkilde
Sec.Treasurer:	Mrs. Poula Christie (Daughter of President)
Committee:	Messrs. F.O.Petersen,Niels Nielsen, Poul Pedersen, W. Madsen, and Mrs.Sorine Møller.

For some months these two centres worked successfully together obtaining increasing sympathy and support from Danes in all parts of New Zealand, and at the same time earning the admiration and respect of the general public. The New Zealand Government, recognising our Patriotic effort, on several occassions permitted us to broadcast Danish Programmes and appeals. The Head Office in Wellington was now faced with difficulty due to lack of support from committee members and prevented Mr. Dahl, whose health was impared, from carrying on the work he had begun, he therefore made an urgent appeal to the Auckland Branch, asking Mr. Langkilde to take over as Dominion President and transferring Headquarters to Auckland. This was duly agreed upon, Mr. Langkilde only accepting the position until such time when a more experienced man was willing to take over. Following a meeting held in Wellington on September 6th, 1942, the former Auckland Committee officially became Executive and Headquarters for the Danish Association in New Zealand, Mr. Dahl remaining as representative for the Wellington Province.

As the newly elected President, Mr. Langkilde stated in his opening speech that the collection of funds for a fighter plane would continue, but only as part of our work, as, in his opinion, the moral support was of ~~equal~~ importance, stressing the point that the suppressed peoples of Denmark would feel uplifted and encouraged by the knowledge that they had the backing of Danes in all parts of the world.

Moral support was given in the form of cabled messages to the Danish Council in London who broadcasted them to Denmark through the B.B.C. On August 10th the Executive Committee received a cable from the Danish Council in London, and marked for private information :- quote - "Regarding Policy Free Danish movement Danish Council reaffirms 9th April message endorsed by Danish organisation free world that Home Front is decisive factor Denmark's future, but apparent voluntary increased help to Germans in Denmark". Realising the great importance involved in the decision a cable was sent to Mr. Christmas Møller, Chairman of the Danish Council in London giving our whole-hearted support in his Policy.