

The work of the Navy League War Council includes the making of comforts for men on mine-sweepers, and on defensively equipped merchant cruisers, and for naval ratings generally. In addition to sending supplementary supplies of woollen goods to naval men serving abroad, the Navy League endeavours to supply comforts to all New Zealand men proceeding Home to join the Royal Navy or the Fleet Air Arm. Each man leaving for overseas receives a navy blue cloth bag containing pullover, scarf, two pairs socks, balaclava, and special navy hussif. The work of preparing these comforts is done by voluntary helpers associated with the various branches of the Navy League and the staff of the Navy Office, Wellington. Other assistance is rendered by voluntary workers associated with Provincial Patriotic Councils, and by sewing classes of various girls' colleges.

The Navy League War Council is not a collecting agent for the National Patriotic Fund Board, but any funds given to that organization are credited to the National Patriotic Fund, from which source the Navy League draws its supplies of woollen and other goods as required. As a representative of the Navy League War Council, Mr. R. Darroch gives valuable assistance to the Board in obtaining comforts for naval men. As representative of the Navy Office on an Advisory Committee of the National Patriotic Council, Lieutenant-Commander Sleeman, Assistant Naval Secretary, takes a keen interest in the requirements of naval men, and, from time to time, advises the Board in regard to comforts required. The Board is satisfied that all reasonable requirements have been met.

VISITING ESCORTS AND UNITS OF THE NEW ZEALAND NAVY.

From time to time naval ratings from visiting escorts and men from ships of the New Zealand Navy are catered for at ports of call in New Zealand, and when the absence of these men has been prolonged special arrangements are made by the Board to provide apples, vegetables, and fresh provisions not included in official issues. Entertainment is arranged locally by the Government and the established entertainment organizations and clubs.

Y.M.C.A. WAR SERVICE COMMITTEE.

On the outbreak of war the Y.M.C.A., which had continued its service with the military forces since the last war, immediately set up a War Service Committee and proceeded to establish its organization on a wartime basis. To enable the Y.M.C.A. to carry on its work until the Patriotic Purposes Regulations were gazetted the Government advanced to that body a loan of £5,000, free of interest, and this amount was subsequently repaid to the Government by the Board. The Y.M.C.A. was appointed a collecting and expending agent of the Board, and thereupon a commencement was made to collect funds for patriotic purposes.

In conjunction with the Salvation Army, the Y.M.C.A. conducted on behalf of the Board a "Fighting Services Welfare Appeal" for the provision and equipment of recreation and institution huts and for patriotic purposes generally.

During the year grants were made to the Y.M.C.A. totalling £10,245 for the maintenance of military, recreational, and institutional huts and marquees in camps in New Zealand. The net cost of the Y.M.C.A. activities overseas (as agent of the Board) was £1,937.

Y.M.C.A. facilities have been provided in thirty-six military and Air Force camps in New Zealand. Ten recreational or institutional huts have been erected or are in the process of completion, and twenty marquees have been used. In the Y.M.C.A. recreational huts facilities are provided for cafeterias and for the playing of table tennis, billiards, darts, and table games of all descriptions. Electric irons are provided in each hut for the use of the men. Post-office and writing facilities are a special feature of these huts. During the year 2,329,250 sheets of writing-paper and 823,325 envelopes were used. A total of thirty-three pianos, thirty-six wireless sets, eighty-four table-tennis tables, and forty-eight billiard-tables have been donated or have been supplied for use in these huts. The Y.M.C.A. recreational huts are available for Church services of all denominations. Where possible, open fireplaces are provided in the huts in order to make them homelike and warm. As in the case of denominational recreational huts, every effort is made to render helpful services to the men, and there is ample evidence that these services have been very much appreciated. The following extracts from letters from men of the forces are typical of many received:—

"The facilities provided did much to brighten the routine of camp life, and the 'Y.M.' became the place of relaxation and cheer after strenuous days on the parade-ground."

Another letter, signed by 532 men on board a troopship, is self-explanatory:—

"We, the undersigned, wish to express our very real appreciation of the efforts of the Y.M.C.A. in general, and its representative, Mr. Briggs, in particular, to provide amusement and distraction during our venture across the oceans.

"Without the organization of concerts, sing-songs, and sports, the provision of reading-matter and of writing-materials, there is no doubt that the majority of us would have suffered from melancholia and homesickness, instead of which no detachment has, after seven weeks' sailing away from their homeland, been more cheerful and content—largely due to the constant attention to our needs, by the cheerful personality of Mr. Briggs, your representative."

The Board has provided and equipped numerous recreational huts overseas, and these are staffed by Y.M.C.A. men, as representatives of the Board, with occasional assistance from men of the forces. Under the leadership of Mr. H. Shove, twelve Y.M.C.A. secretaries are serving with the men of the New Zealand Forces overseas. As the men have been moved out into the desert the Y.M.C.A. service has become more mobile, and many visits have been paid by Y.M.C.A. men to the men on outpost duty, or to those on special training duty in the desert. In many cases special canteen services have been provided in order to meet the more urgent needs of the men. In Cairo a special united Y.M.C.A. hut was built, and, with the aid of the New Zealand Y.M.C.A. and local citizens, a most attractive centre has been provided for the use of the men.