

and are becoming exceedingly popular in the forces. Discussion courses are available on most subjects about which the New Zealand soldier likes to talk. If a suitable course is not available, the Information Service will prepare one on a suggested subject.

Films and film strips are available in fair numbers and the libraries are growing. ERS trains its own projectionists and repairs its own equipment. It is anticipated that wide use will be made by units of the film libraries.

The scope of the section's work can be gauged from the fact that it is able to supply articles on places of interest in Italy and will provide information

about any place of historic or geographic importance, send to Unit Education Officers quiz questions and answers, "Brains Trust" answers, debating circle data, and helpful material for any general educational activity.

The section has built up an excellent map library, and it is also responsible for organising hobbies huts and collecting tools and materials for them. Booklets on hobbies have been ordered for use in 2 NZEF, and the section has prepared hints on the organisation and management of the huts themselves.

The service is there. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find."

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## New Zealanders in Berlin Cages

For some years now a party of New Zealanders has been held in captivity in Berlin. From all reports they have been treated very well since their arrival, but it is, of course, impossible to tell whether they have survived the continual bombing attacks or the Russian battering of the German capital.

The captives in question are six keas which were sent to the Berlin Zoo by a wool buyer, Bruno Beyer, about eight years ago. They were caught in the Hollyford Valley, and for a time were on exhibition in the lounge of a Dunedin hotel. The birds created a lot of interest in Berlin, and a report on their safe arrival and well-being was broadcast to New Zealand. Later, the director of the Zoological Gardens wrote to those responsible for sending him the birds and enclosed photographs of them in their new home. "They represent one of the most interesting varieties in our collection," he wrote, "and now that they have become accustomed to the food we give them, we hope to keep them for a long time."

The kea is an interesting bird. Its haunts are in the high country of the

South Island where it has made many friends among tourists, and many enemies among the sheep-farmers. It is a friendly bird with a definite sense of humour, a liking for shiny articles, and a keen resentment for acts of hostility. It indulges in petty thieving much in the same way as the magpie, and there is nothing it likes more than a mirror. Tobogganing down the roof of a tent or a tin hut is another popular pastime. Farmers charge the kea with attacking sheep and lambs, and causing serious loss of life in high country areas. So much evidence was collected as to the depredations of the birds that the Government agreed to pay the sum of five shillings a beak for them. Even so there is little chance of the mountain parrot dying out as it nests in almost inaccessible spots. Whatever destruction the birds cause to sheep, they do a great deal in keeping down pestiferous insects.

The cry of the kea is compared with the mewing of a cat, but it also utters a whistle, a chuckle, and a suppressed scream. No doubt, the Berlin keas have omitted the chuckle from their repertoire in recent times.