

Nine thousand parcels were forwarded to Great Britain quarterly, and 100,000 cigarettes for free distribution. In addition, at Christmas time a similar number of parcels were forwarded, containing 200 cigarettes, 12 oz. tobacco, and 8 packets cigarette-papers. These were specially packed by a voluntary committee in Wellington, but were labelled and despatched through the post by the New Zealand War Services Association, London, to all New Zealanders serving in detached units throughout Great Britain, Gibraltar, Malta, and the West African zone. Special supplies of New Zealand lamb and canned fruit were forwarded to England to enable a Christmas party to be held at the Forces Club.

In anticipation of a German surrender, towards the end of the year Major S. C. Read was appointed Commissioner for the Board in England to care for repatriated prisoners of war. Major Read was provided with £25,000 stg., in addition to large supplies of comforts which were sent forward for the benefit of the men who had been behind barbed wire for some years. A special staff of Y.M.C.A. personnel under Mr. C. Cassells accompanied Major Read to Great Britain to assist in this work. Unfortunately, the release of our prisoners of war did not take place during the year under review.

At this time also Colonel Waite, the Board's Commissioner in the Middle East, and Lady Freyberg were in London making the necessary arrangements for the opening of a special club for repatriated prisoners of war.

The men of the Royal Navy and New Zealand Naval and Air Force personnel were not forgotten, sheep-skin jackets and woollen goods being sent to them from New Zealand in addition to gift parcels and cigarettes.

*Canada.*—The Anzac Club, Halifax, which was financed proportionately by the Australian Comforts Fund and the National Patriotic Fund Board, continued to function during the major portion of the year. Professor C. L. Bennett was Chairman of the committee controlling the club, Mr. W. E. Rockinhead was Hon. Secretary, and Mr. F. K. Gresham, New Zealand Y.M.C.A., was attached to the club as Manager. This club was the last contact New Zealand Air Force personnel in training in Canada had with the Board prior to their departure for the United Kingdom. It was used also as a distributing centre for comforts.

In December, 1943, the club was closed on account of the fact that Air personnel no longer used Halifax as a port of departure. The Board feels that special thanks are due to the above named and their committee of fellow-Canadians in Halifax for the praiseworthy assistance which they gave at all times not only to the club, but to all New Zealand personnel passing through.

*Pacific Area: 3rd N.Z. Division.*—During the period of this report the 3rd N.Z. Division went into action in Treasury, Vella Lavella, and Green Islands. Later the Division returned to New Caledonia, and then to New Zealand to be disbanded. The Board feels that a summary of the final report given to the 1944 Patriotic Conference by Major C. W. O. Brain, the Board's Commissioner, on his return to New Zealand is the best report that can be made in regard to the patriotic venture with the 3rd Division, as follows:—

When the 3rd Division first went to New Caledonia the National Patriotic Fund Board staff consisted of ten Y.M.C.A. Secretaries, under the control of Mr. C. Cassells, who, in addition to being Senior Y.M.C.A. Secretary, also acted as the Board's representative. When I arrived in New Caledonia in May, 1943, I found that the only amenities provided were two roadhouses, which had been constructed by soldier and native labour, and had been furnished from Patriotic Funds.

When the 3rd Division first left New Zealand it was equipped as lightly as possible, on the understanding that it would probably go into action almost immediately. The Division was, however, left in New Caledonia for a considerable time, and was on defensive positions on an island approximately 250 miles long and 34 miles wide. The communications were narrow roads, and the Division was spread over more than half the island. The supply problem was an extremely difficult one, on account of the demand for shipping for weapons of war and the ordinary needs of the troops. Consequently, patriotic supplies were in low priority.