

III. PHYSICAL WELFARE AND RECREATION

The work of the Physical Welfare and Recreation Branch has continued to expand in several directions.

GENERAL

Leadership training has once more held a prominent position among Branch activities, while community-centre projects have received a large measure of assistance in the way of advice and planning, and the introduction of suitable indoor-recreation programmes.

The general policy of assistance to sports clubs on request has been maintained.

Those sports and pastimes which have only recently been introduced, or are experiencing difficulty in becoming established, have also been substantially assisted by Branch Officers. Activities which have thus benefited include firms' recreation groups, women's cricket, women's bowls, indoor bowls, volleyball, and cycle-touring.

As a result largely of Branch activities in the past, softball and indoor basketball are now firmly established in the main centres and urban areas. Promotion of these sports during the period under review has therefore been confined in the main to rural districts, and the work has been well worth while.

Rural areas have also received coaching in cricket and athletics. A notable example of this was the work done in the Central and North Otago areas.

"Learn to swim" campaigns were conducted in seven districts during the summer months, in conjunction with the national "prevent drowning" campaign, with classes for all age-groups. The campaign in the Wellington district was again very successful and 1,254 people were taught to swim, an increase of over 700 on the number who received tuition last year. In future years it is proposed to place more emphasis on the safety angle of learning to swim.

Details of major projects and work carried out on a national basis are given below.

HUTT RECREATION WEEK AND PLAYGROUND SCHEME

A Hutt Valley "recreation week" was held in May, 1949, and was essentially an experiment towards creating a community spirit among the residents of a newly-settled and rapidly-expanding area.

The Branch, assisted by the Naenae Community Centre Committee wherever possible, organized and conducted the week's programme of recreation to show what could be accomplished with limited facilities.

Co-operation was sought and received from the Lower Hutt City Council and also all the Church groups in the area (who readily made their Church halls available), so that a full programme of recreation was enjoyed by children during the day and by adults at night.

As a follow-on from this recreation week, and as a consolidation of a certain community spirit aroused, a few recreation clubs were formed. However, the most important resulting project was the Naenae Community Playground Scheme.

The City Council set aside an area of land for a playground, which was developed so as to give most recreation to the greatest number.

Some of the residents who had shown particular interest in the recreation week were formed into a committee which was called the "Naenae Community Recreation Leaders Group." The function of this group was to teach games, allot playing times, and generally control the running of the playground, and towards this end two Branch officers conducted a course in leadership and games skills.