



## Take Soldiers Into Your Homes

(Condensed from a talk from 2YA last week by MRS. J. W. INNES, liaison officer of the Wellington Week-end Hospitality Service)

HAT I am asking to-night is the hospitality of your home for men who are strangers to our city. Perhaps you will say our men should feel at home in Wellington even though they come from other parts of New Zealand—it's their country—but just take your mind back to some time when you went for a holiday to another part of New Zealand. Did you feel just as much at home there or did you sometimes wish that among all the strange faces you could see someone you knew? Well, our men are just the same, and remember, they are not holiday-makers staying in the best hotels. Believe me, they really appreciate the hand of friendship extended to them.

Some months ago, I started a weekend hospitality scheme for those of our men who wished to avail themselves of it. Well, the response was surprising. Some week-ends I had more men than I had hostesses, so had to let some of the men wait till the following week. Seems a pity, doesn't it, when so many homes would be opened to our men if the people only realised that the little they can do means a lot to someone who has nowhere to go for his week-end leave? What pleases the men so much is the thought that their own people want to do something for them.

Many people ask me if any romances come out of these week-ends. Well, naturally, when an unattached man meets an unattached girl, he wishes to follow it up with other meetings, and several engagements have resulted. One man, who has now gone overseas, occasionally writes to remind me not to send any eligible soldier to the home where I first sent him!

## Hospitality for Girls, Too

This week-end hospitality service became so popular that I was asked to extend it to the girls also. I found that many of these girls haven't applied for week-end leave for two or three months as they prefer to spend their time in camp in preference to walking the streets with nothing to do and spending their well-earned money on overnight accommodation. There are many homes in and around Wellington which would, I know, be only too glad to give an invitation to one of these girls for the week-end.

Let me give you some recent instances where hospitality has been given and gratefully received. One morning I received a telephone call to say that an ex-overseas man was arriving from the north and would be going south that night. The man was totally blind, and his wife was travelling with him as escort. They were met on arrival by a voluntary Red Cross transport driver, but instead of being taken to the city to spend the day in a private hotel, they were taken out to a private home, where a quiet but sincere welcome did much to shorten the day in Wellington for them. Another case was

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