

islands, and these were required to be provided with a constant supply of all amenities and comforts. In October, 1945, owing to the sharp drop in the number of personnel in the area, Squadron Leader J. R. Herbert, the Board's Commissioner, who had been responsible for the organization and operation of the patriotic work there, returned to New Zealand, and the control then devolved upon Mr. Alistair Dunn, Senior Y.M.C.A. Secretary. Much of the work in the latter stages was concerned with the disposal of assets, and in this connection sales were made to the Australian Forces and church missions.

The outstanding success achieved in the provision of amenities and comforts to Air Force personnel was due largely to the efforts of Squadron Leader Herbert and also to the assistance rendered by Air Department.

Fiji.—In November, 1945, Captain J. K. B. Fountain, the Board's Commissioner with the New Zealand Forces in Fiji, returned to New Zealand, and the work of caring for the Service personnel became a matter for Y.M.C.A. with funds and supplies provided by the Board.

Norfolk Island.—This area continued to be serviced by the Church Army Military Affairs Committee on behalf of the Board.

United Kingdom

Like other areas, many of the Service personnel had been repatriated. Nevertheless, there was still a considerable volume of work in connection with the repatriation of prisoners of war and also those Service personnel remaining in England.

The New Zealand Forces Club, which had been in operation at 4-6 Charing Cross Road, London, closed on the 31st December, 1945, after rendering a very valuable service for five years.

Middle East and Italy

The year under review saw a gradual withdrawal of troops from Italy to Egypt, and, with the exception of the Division for Japan, their repatriation to New Zealand.

Lowry Hut.—This hut, which was one of the best known in the Middle East, closed at the end of October, 1945.

Realization of Assets.—Owing to the diversified nature of the patriotic property, its realization presented a very real problem. Goods were offered, firstly, to the British Army at current N.A.A.F.I. prices, and then to civilian buyers upon a competitive basis. Prices obtained were generally very satisfactory, and the sum of £350,000, approximately, has been realized.

Colonel F. Waite, the Board's Commissioner in the Middle East, returned to New Zealand in 1945, and his duties there were assumed by Major K. R. Collins, who was repatriated to New Zealand in September, 1946.

The Board desires to express its appreciation of the work of Colonel Waite, who had been its Commissioner in the Middle East since 1940, and of Major Collins for his part in the patriotic work in the area.

Repatriation of Prisoners of War

The few remaining prisoners of war returned to New Zealand from England during the year. Major S. C. Read, the Board's Commissioner in the United Kingdom, together with Mr. C. Cassels, Senior Y.M.C.A. Secretary, were responsible for the very efficient service rendered repatriated prisoners of war, and the Board desires to express its appreciation of the work of these two officers. Major Read returned to New Zealand in April, 1946.