

WELCOME CLUB

Growth In Popularity 16,000 Visitors During Year Since the opening of the Timaru Welcome Club a year ago, 16,007 members of the Armed Forces have made use of the facilities provided by the club, and the attendance shows a steady increase month by month. "The Welfare Club Committee was fortunate in securing premises centrally situated and requiring comparatively little renovation for the establishment of a club for the entertainment, rest and recreation of men of the forces on leave in the district," said the chairman. Mr J. G. Duncan, after reviewing the steps leading to the establishment of the club in October, 1941. "The public and business houses of Timaru and district were very generous in their support," Mr Duncan continued, "and besides giving a considerable quantity of furniture, including a piano and billiards table, gave towards the furnishing of the rooms cash donations of over £140, in which was represented £50 from members of the South Canterbury Returned Services' Association. As a result of this fine effort, the club was warmly and comfortably furnished by the people of Timaru without any call on the Patriotic Fund. In consequence, the club, containing all tire amenities required, was officially opened by the Mayor, Mr W. G. Tweedy, at a representative gathering on October 22, 1941. Attendance Figures "The attendances from the beginning have confirmed the foresight of the sponsors and have given encouragement to the committee in making necessary adjustments from time to time. With the establishment of military camps in the district, the popularity of the club rapidly increased and, as shown by the figures, soared to a particularly high level in the final month of the period: November, 1941, 186; December, 1941, 224; January, 1942, 298; February, 417; March, 420; April, 455; May, 924; June, 1353; July, 1980; August, 2835; September, 2974; October, 3941, a total of 16,007. "In the early stages, it was found necessary to open the club only on two afternoons and evenings during the week, but from the beginning of 1942, the committee has from time to time extended the hours until at present the club is open continuously each day from 10 a.m. to 10 pm. With the urgent need of providing adequate facilities of accommodation for men of the forces arriving and departing during the night, especially as a result of the night expresses being run. the club now remains open throughout the night on a Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. A night custodian has been engaged and adequate temporary sleeping accommodation is being provided. Supply of Meals "A recent innovation to meet the needs of the times has been the supply of light meals daily in an attractive dining room recently provided. Appropriate extensions to the kitchen have assisted a large group of energetic women in arranging and serving meals. The committee feels deeply indebted to the willing and generous assistance of the women under the control of the Welcome Club Ladies' Committee for giving so much of their time gratuitously in the interests of the men. Apart from the alterations and renovations to the kitchen and dining section, a large adjoining room which the committee had sub-let until the need arose for an extension was taken over in the early part of August, 1942. The generosity of the public has again been evidenced by the recent donation of another billiards table which, together with suitable renovations and general furnishings, has provided a fitting extension to the club's amusement facilities. Assistance Appreciated "The Committee is greatly indebted to

many citizens who have so willingly given of their time in this patriotic effort," Mr Duncan continued. "Their generous assistance has to no small degree been reflected in the low running expense of the club for the period. It is therefore gratifying to record that, although the attendances at the club have been so heavy, a saving of £100 has been achieved on the esti-

Assistance Appreciated "The Committee is greatly indebted to many citizens who have so willingly given of their time in this patriotic effort," Mr Duncan continued. "Their generous assistance has to no small degree been reflected in the low running expense of the club for the period. It is therefore gratifying to record that, although the attendances at the club have been so heavy, a saving of £100 has been achieved on the estimated annual figure of £345 as approved by the Canterbury Provincial Patriotic Fund Committee in Christchurch. Special praise is due to all those citizens who during the year have acted as custodians, especially to Messrs A. L. Bennett, J. A. McBeath, **W. McLaren** and S. Rodgers who during the last few months have given six hours duty each alternate day and evening gratuitously in the interests of the club. Tire committee is extremely grateful to Mr W. A. L. Leech, the honorary secretary, for his untiring efforts in the interests of the club since its Inception. Of the many donors who have been thanked personally by the committee, the directorate of Messrs J. R. Bruce Ltd. deserve special mention for their generosity and assistance. From the many expressions of appreciation, the committee feel that the club is providing entertainment, rest and recreation for men, and recently, women of the Fortes amidst warm and comfortable surroundings to a degree truly representative of the good will and regard in which the citizens of South Canterbury hold the .Fighting Forces."

TIMARU HERALD, VOLUME CLIV, ISSUE 22716, 18 OCTOBER 1943, PAGE 4

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Review Of Activities 49,000 Meals Provided During The Year In addition to its other social activities. th? Timaru Welcome Club, which has now completed the second year of its opeiations. provided 49,067 teas and meals during the past 12 months. With premises ideally situated, the club has continued to provide entertainment. rest and recreation for the hundreds of servicemen on leave in or passing through the district weekly. The many complimentary references paid by the men give every indication that the club rates high in popularity within and beyond the Dominion. Although during the year considerable changes have taken place in the military commitments of the Dominion and. in particular, the numbers in' camp in the district, the attendances at the club have remained remarkably high, as disclosed by the statistics recording the number of teas and meals served, the figures for the corresponding months in 1942 being given in parentheses:—October 3941 (112), November 4178 (186). December 4332 (224), January 4673 < 298). February 4387 (417). March 4997 <420). April 4170 (455). Mav 3916 (924). June 3930 (1353), July 3576 (1980), August 3898 <2835). September 3069 (2974); totals 49.067 (12.178). The statistics indicate merely the number of teas served, but do not include those visitors who call but do not avail themselves of the opportunity of refreshments

provided free of charge. The generous patronage of the men on furlough from the Middle East is further tribute to the popularity of the Club. From the early stages when the Club was opened only for two afternoons and evenings weekly, the hours of opening have now been extended to cater for continuous opening each day in the week from 10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. In addition, the club remains open throughout the night each Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation and light refreshments for the members of the Forces arriving and departing by the night expresses. Light Meals Appreciated The light meals, which total up to 800 per month, are appreciated immensely by the men. Those on furlough from the Middle East have recently been granted the concession of free meals at the club. The committee is indebted to the large group of enthusiastic women helpers who daily attend to the arranging of these services. Suitable renovations to the heating and cooking facilities have been provided to meet the extended requirements. Of the light meals served, have proved easily the most popular item on the menu, as indicated by the fact that up to 30 dozen eggs are consumed over the week-ends. The generosity and interest of the public is shown by the supplies of cakes, scones, eggs, etc., received regularly each week from citizens, and especially from the country through the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union and Women's Institutes. The continued cooperation of these latter organisations is extremely appreciated. The club committee desires to thank sincerely Messrs A. L. Bennett, A. C. McSeath and **W- McLaren**, who continue to serve gratuitously as custodians of the club. Mr S. Rodgers for attention to the billiards tables, Mr W. Black (night custodian), the voluntary assistant custodians, Mr W. A. L. Leech for his interest as honorary secretary, the many donors, and Mr J. G. Duncan and the women who arrange and dispense the many meals and refreshments. The co-operation of private guest houses in the supplying of accommodation at the weekends, especially during the summer months, is also appreciated. Mr C. N. Hamilton, who completed the term of six months as chairman of the committee, retired from office. A unanimous expression of appreciation was accorded to him on his interest and enthusiasm. For the ensuing period. Mr R. J. Runciman has been elected chairman, with Mr E. T. Stout as deputy chairman. In entering upon the third year of its activities, the committee feels confident that the club is providing patriotic service, and one fully representative of the regard in which the members of the Fighting Forces are held by the citizens of the district.