

OUR SOLDIER BOYS.

WORK AT THE METHODIST INSTITUTE,
TRENTHAM.

Letter from the Chaplain.

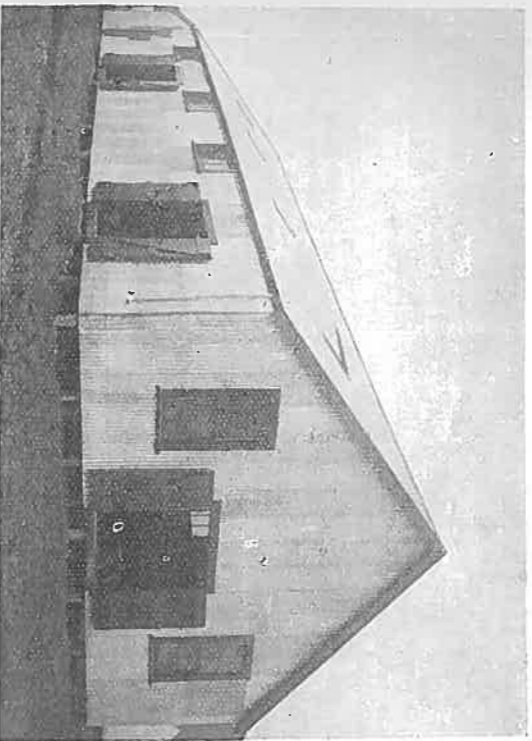
Dear Sir.—Many friends have informed us that Methodists throughout the Dominion are desirous to know how matters are progressing at the "Soldiers' Institute." Let our first note be one of thankfulness to God for having inspired the Methodist Church to erect and equip such a serviceable building. All who have seen it have expressed surprise and gratification at its adaptability to meet the needs of the men for whom it has been provided. It is a credit to Methodism

7.30 and is followed by a prayer meeting.

FAMILY WORSHIP

Is held every evening in the chaplain's room, when a hymn is sung, Scripture is read, and prayers are offered for "loved ones at home," "churches we represent," "grace to witness in camp," "comrades at the front," etc.

The attendance varies from twelve to twenty-four. At times as many



THE METHODIST INSTITUTE, TRENTHAM CAMP.

and does honour to Councillor Bennett, of Wellington, who personally supervised its erection. The Church is also under a debt of gratitude to our worthy president for the deep interest he has evinced in all that appertains to the welfare of the institute. Despite the heavy demands of his own work and the onerous duties of his office he has devoted himself wholeheartedly to everything which would make for efficiency. His many visits have been greatly appreciated.

OPENING.

The institute was officially opened by the president of conference on April 16. We were favoured with a concert rendered by Trinity Church choir (Wellington South) under the leadership of Mr E. Dawson. Since then the institute has continued to grow in popularity, and everything has moved along smoothly. The work is mainly of a two-fold nature—Spiritual and social.

SPIRITUAL.

There is ever present in our mind the thought that these men are going forth to fight, and if need be, die for the Empire; therefore there must be no reserve in speaking to them earnestly and seriously concerning the welfare of the soul.

CHURCH PARADE.

This is compulsory upon all who are not on duty, and is held at 9.15 on Sunday morning. The hall is invariably well filled. In the afternoon at two o'clock a Bible Class is held, and as we have a fair proportion of the cream of many Bible Classes, the meetings are not only enjoyable but a benediction. In the evening a song service, assisted by an orchestra, is held from 6.45 to 7.30. We use the People's Hymnary. Dr. Downes' Litany for our Army and Navy has been procured and is sung each Sunday. The evening service commences at

No one devoid of camp experience can rightly judge the moral courage required to bear such a fastimony. Yet the chaplain feels that his most important work is not done in meetings, but in personal conversation with the men. This is a work where results cannot be tabulated, and one can but trust that the seed sown will germinate and yield a harvest of righteousness. Caution is required, but thus far he has not met with a single instance of resentment.

SOCIAL.

One object of the chaplain's is to create sufficient interest for the men in the institute that they will have no desire to go to Wellington unless they have something definite to go for. It will thus be seen that indirectly the institute assists in safeguarding the discipline of the camp. In the

SOCIAL WORK

the premier position must be given to the writing room. There is accommodation for fifty men, and every seat is occupied from 5.45 p.m. until 9 o'clock, when the rush begins to tone down. Many unable to obtain seats write in other parts of the institute. All writing material is provided free. We calculate that over 4000 letters are written every week. This means that thousands of lives are brightened every week by the facilities given for writing by the Methodist Church. In the social hall we have a splendid piano and a good supply of music. The camp is rich in its musical talent, and songs and choruses enliven things considerably. Tables are set apart for billiards, ping-pong, chess, draughts, dominoes, etc. Our thanks are here tendered to the donors of books, magazines, etc. These are a source of interest to the men. Occasionally concerts are rendered by the men within the camp, and sometimes we are favoured with a visit by one of our church choirs. We greatly appreciated the one given by the Pekone Methodist choir on May 13, under the able leadership of Mr Ackroyd. Many men have told the chaplain that it was one of the best concerts ever given in camp. Our desire is that they will soon be with us again. At present we are looking forwards to the visit of Lower Hutt choir on June 1. We thank you, Mr Editor, for bringing before our people the need of a good photograph. In response to your appeal, we have received from "Amberley," £1, "Wellington Friend," 10s, "Soldier in Camp," 10s. "T's still "A Jong Way to Tipperary," but we have faith that we shall get there. We can't think there is any need to make a further appeal. We are grateful to the "Methodist Times" Committee for generously donating six copies of each issue to our institute.

SPECIAL NOTE TO MINISTERS.

The chaplain tenders his thanks to those who have kindly notified him of men coming to Trentham. At present the camp is 5000 strong, and by the end of May it will have increased to 7000. The size of the camp makes it well nigh impossible to find a man unless one knows the platoon or squad and company to which he is attached. It would therefore greatly facilitate the work if each minister would supply every man with a note of introduction, and urge him to report himself at once, in addition to acquainting the chaplain. In some cases a month has been spent in searching for a man without success.

TO PARENTS AND FRIENDS.

When writing to your sons and friends inform them that the Methodist chaplain desires to make their acquaintance. For all God's goodness we give thanks and take courage.

W. WALKER,

(Chaplain-Captain).

YOUNG man (Methodist) desirous of learning fruit industry, wishes position on farm; any district. Address: Wm. O. Brown, "Coombe Bank," Waverley, Dunedin.

METHODIST INSTITUTE, TRENTHAM CAMP.

AN APPEAL.

The Methodist Institute at Trentham Camp is doing excellent religious and social work, and the chaplain is exercising a growing influence. Thanks largely to the good service rendered to the Church by the builder (Mr W. H. Bennett), we have an efficient and economical building, second to none in the camp in adaptability for the purpose. But there is an urgent need for more funds. At the Christchurch Conference, £337 was promised on behalf of the various districts, and the bulk of this amount has been forwarded to the treasurer. But the Institute, with equipment, has cost £374, and the difference between these amounts must be met. No provision was made by the conference for the running of the Institute, lighting, stationery, repairs and incidental expenses, which involve an outlay of at least £1 per week. An average of 300 letters a day are written in the Institute at present. On Sunday last the chaplain issued 900 sheets of paper and 450 envelopes. Consider what a blessing this provision alone means to the writers and to parents and friends. There never has been a finer class of men in the camp than at present, and as these men are prepared to give their lives for the Empire, and for us, it is not a great thing to ask our people to provide the amount required to meet these necessary expenses. The committee has requested us to make an appeal through the "Methodist Times," urging each circuit to add to its previous contribution, and asking also for individual subscriptions. We do so with full confidence that there will be a sufficient response for this good work, as the need is an urgent one.

On behalf of the Military Committee,
J. DAWSON, President.
G. S. COOK, Secretary.

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