

They're Learning To Be New Zealand Wives

THE first group of 19 Canadian wives and two fiancées of New Zealand airmen to leave Canada had just arrived when we went along to interview them, and as some of the airmen hadn't seen their wives for three years, and the four who were fathers had never met Garry (two years five months), Shirley (15 months), Buddy, or more correctly, Andrew (seven or eight months), or little Garry (four months), their only coherent reaction for a time was how marvellous it was to be here at last.

Well, it was nearly too marvellous for one of them. As we reached the side of the ship, a corporal was carrying a baby down the gangway followed by its mother. The cameraman was waiting, and snapped the trio as they stepped on to the wharf — but the baby didn't belong to the corporal, and what's more, the corporal was not married, simply one of the officials helping with the landing. "I'm not going to the movies for a month," was his comment.

"Will it be on the screen?" asked the child's mother. "We must watch for it."

"We don't have pictures, we live right out in the backblocks," said her newly-discovered sister-in-law.

"Gee! I thought New Zealand was so tiny that you couldn't get far away from anywhere."

On the way to the reception remarks were passed about the seagulls perched along the wharf. "But don't you have seagulls in Canada?" someone asked.

"Oh, yes, but they look so intelligent here. They seem to know what's going on."

From Prairie to Hills

Ten of the girls came from Winnipeg, where most of them had belonged to the Anzac Group, a club formed just over a year ago for the brides of Australian and New Zealand airmen. They were all well-dressed, and with one exception, all wore hats. "Normally, I don't wear a hat," one commented. "But we were told it would be winter here, and at home we have to wear hats in winter for the cold." It was a warm, sunny day, and their impressions of our winter were definitely favourable.

"But you don't have central heating in New Zealand, do you? I suppose you have to have a fireplace in every room. . . . You don't! Then how do you keep warm? We have fireplaces in Canada, but they are only for show. We just turn them on when we have visitors because they look so nice and cosy."

"You know," one of them remarked, "we know so little about New Zealand. We've been pooling our knowledge on the boat so that we wouldn't appear so ignorant when we arrived. We've been practising eating with a knife and fork, too! But one thing that we'll have to master soon is this Social Security system of yours. It seems so very complicated to us, because we haven't anything like it at home. It's all right for your people—you grow up with it and probably know it off backwards."

They were also keen to know how we managed with rationing. Did we have enough coupons to buy all the clothes we needed? "We thought we were hard done by, but we had only tea, sugar, coffee, and butter rationed, and we each got one pound of butter a week," they said. "For a time meat was rationed, but that restriction has been lifted." They eagerly inspected a New Zealand coupon-book, and were surprised to find that our meat coupons

(continued on next page)



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