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THE big ship slid into the dock. The bands struck up. The tiers of soldiers cramming over the rails cheered and cat-called. These were Wellington's familiar hills. Those were their countrymen clustered on the wharf.

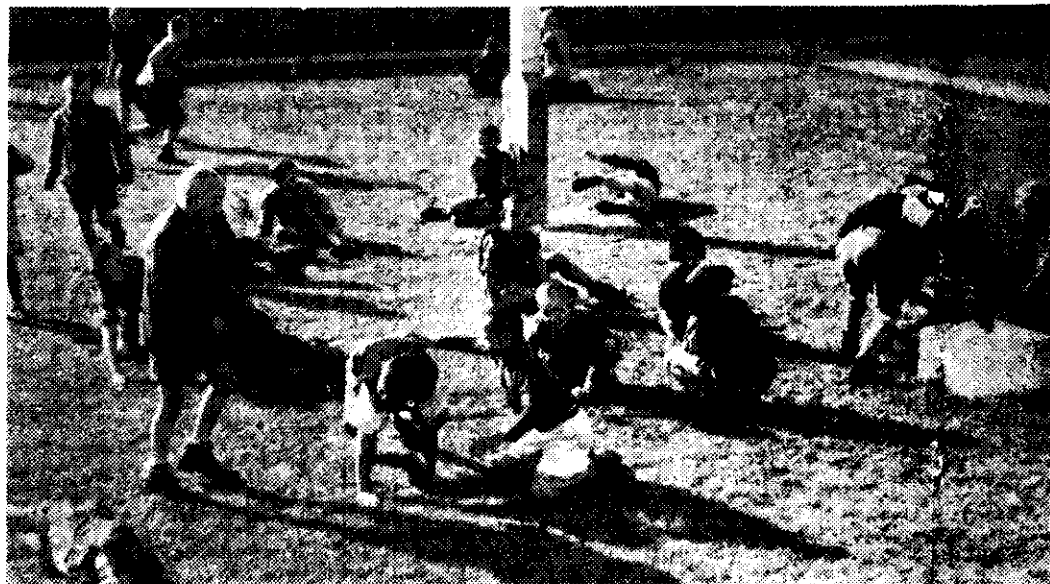
But there was something that differentiated this ship from other troopships we had seen. The foredeck was crammed with children, and up on that deck there was silence. Small heads, some shaven, some well-covered, were motionless. Small faces, some pale, some sunburnt, were turned to the shore. Their eyes were staring, their mouths were shut. They were wondering what kind of fate was waiting for them this time; whether those people down on the wharves were kind or cold; whether this was one more alien port in their trek to sanctuary, or home at last. It was five years since they had been thrown out of their homes, and the only reminders of those days which they still had with them were the few things they had packed into small suitcases.

Of course these Polish children were "news," and the Press hurried on board for sensations; but at the sight of all that quietness and orderliness the news sense died, and was replaced by a feeling of wonder and humility. They had been so disregarded, they had travelled so far and seen so much, and yet they were still children. The youngest ones smiled shyly and twisted their legs, some a little older laughed among themselves, but the oldest stood off watching almost apathetically. But whether they talked, played, or did nothing, they were all alike in their orderly unobtrusiveness. They didn't clamour for attention, they were there because they had been put there, they were obedient because they had been told to obey. New happenings were just happenings, and they accepted them without a murmur and with pathetic resignation.

* * *

THE Press must have some story, however, but could they speak English? Different reporters tried different methods. I sat down next to one of the Polish women and started to talk.

FROM A FA



As soon as they got off the train at Pahiatua, many of the small boys rushed for the green grass, and began to frolic on it.