

THEY LOST THEIR ENGLISH ACCENT

WE had been chatting to a group of British children at the ship's side. They were some of the evacuees who had come to New Zealand from England five years ago and were returning, many of them with reluctance. Some were from Yorkshire and some from Lancashire, but where were the accents they had brought with them, the inflections so quaint, at first, to New Zealand ears? They had vanished.

Among those in the first batch to leave were Eileen Cusheon, Joyce and Rosaleen Groom, all of Sidcup, Kent, and Ada Bradley and Owen Laycock, of Yorkshire. Eileen worked while in New Zealand as a telephone operator, Joyce as a teacher, Rosaleen was at school, Ada had a job on a farm, and Owen was on the staff of a kindergarten.

"When I arrived in New Zealand," said Ada, "nobody seemed able to under-

stand me. When I explained, on one occasion, that I was late for an appointment because I had lost my bark-poop, there was a roar of laughter. I didn't mind a bit; we are 'Pommies' and proud of it. But before I knew where I was I found myself talking like a New Zealander."

We suggested the possibility of a return to the "bark-poop" manner of speech through the party being all together again and with an English crew on the ship.

"Oh yes, that may happen," they said. "If we go back to the Yorkshire or Lancashire accent our parents will be none the wiser, and if we return talking like New Zealanders there will be just as big a laugh as you had at us."

Their deepest general impression of life in New Zealand was its freedom. People here, they thought, were keener on games than they were anywhere else. Swimming, basketball, tennis and hockey

were here for the asking, with plenty of encouragement and facilities. Family life, too, they thought, was freer and easier than in England. They appreciated the New Zealander's outdoor life in the week-ends and the general sense of independence. But home was home. While they did not look forward to queueing up for goods and food again, it would be just lovely to see their parents and friends.

Won't Forget Their Foster-Parents

To their hosts and hostesses — their foster-parents in New Zealand — they were warmly grateful. Throughout their stay they had been in touch with home through free cables and occasional broadcasts. Three girls have become engaged to marry New Zealanders, while some others have permission from their parents to stay here.

Of the boys, there was John Pye, aged 18, who worked for a short period with the NBS, in the programme department and assisting "Aunt Molly," and later in the Public Service Commissioner's Office. He attended Victoria University, where he took the Arts course, which he expects to continue in England before entering the Church.

He summed up his impressions of his stay here in this way: "People in New Zealand seem to me to be more broad-minded in some ways than they are in England. Probably because the Dominion goes in for more outdoor activity, the general outlook is more practical. And that, perhaps, is why in mathematics and science New Zealand is ahead of England; but England greatly outstrips the Dominion in English and the classics."

Sixteen-year-old Ian Graham, of Edinburgh, still a schoolboy, has been studying marine engineering. "I'll be coming back here all right," he said. "I'm burning with beans to get on with the job and I might return in the engine-room of a ship."

Curry. "Then you return to Divisional Headquarters and check up on what you have seen yourself and heard from the men, with the intelligence officers. From that you write your story and read it through the microphone. The completed disc is rushed by a dispatch rider to the nearest aerodrome where, at certain times, a plane leaves for the nearest communication centre. Here the script is censored and broadcast to London. The script accompanies every recording and is met by a BBC representative, who puts the disc on the air. Then it is re-recorded in London for broadcasting in the first transmission."

Some long distances had to be covered by the unit. During the African campaign it was necessary for one of the staff to go 300 to 400 miles to a communication centre. It was, by the way, at Tripoli when Mr. Churchill was there and recorded his address to the Division.

The unit was constantly on the search for "news" and travelled with the first flight of New Zealanders to Italy. Among the pieces of action recorded there were the shelling of the brickworks after the Sangro River crossing and the bombing of the monastery at Cassino. All these

were actual sound records, accompanied by descriptions. Artillery barrages and aerial combat were taken on the discs as they were happening. A specially good one was the tank battle by the 19th Armoured Regiment which supported a British Infantry Brigade in the cutting of Highway Six, the last escape route of the enemy in Cassino.

"Historic" Equipment

While it was the principal job of the unit to accompany and report on the activities of the Division, New Zealanders in the Navy and Air Force were not overlooked. The microphone and recording equipment were taken on to the destroyers Neptune and Mallory and also on to a minesweeper in the Adriatic to cover the services. The equipment is historic in itself for, as well as recording grim battles, it has been used by Mr. Churchill, General Montgomery, General Auchinleck, and Sir Arthur Conyngnam.

Mr. Curry returned under the Army Replacement Scheme, having been away four years—a year over his due time. The unit is now in the hands of John Proudfoot, of Wellington, and Vivian Spender, of Napier, with R. Miller and C. G. Lewis, of Christchurch, all of the staff of the NBS.



A group of British evacuee "children" singing "Auld Lang Syne" with their foster-parents, on the wharf before leaving Wellington.

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were recorded of the bitter engagements at Ruweisat Ridge, Point 63, and Miteriya Ridge. The New Zealanders had taken a leading part in the breakthrough at Alamein launched by Montgomery on October 23, 1942, and the unit's account of this Eighth Army attack was the first world-release of Rommel's defeat.

The unit had accompanied the Division in the series of famous left hooks which resulted in the breaking of the Agheila Line and the entry into Tripoli; and it was with the forces which smashed Rommel's strong stand at Mareth.

Collecting the News

"So actually your job was as a war correspondent reporting battles," we suggested to Mr. Curry.

He agreed, adding that all descriptions of actions were sent to the BBC when they had been recorded.

We suggested that it would be very difficult for one commentator to secure a full description of an action, and asked how the information was gained.

"You go to the battalion or brigade involved in the fight and find out from them how the show went," said Mr.

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