

★ *THE writer of this article is the wife of a New Zealand soldier whom she met in Europe before the war. As many women similarly placed are finding it a little difficult to settle down, it was suggested to her that her impressions at the end of her first year as a New Zealander might be helpful to those others as well as interesting to women readers in general.*

VICTORIAN, BUT NONE THE WORSE FOR IT

New Zealand As An Immigrant Sees It

★ **N**EW ZEALAND is a small and a young country, so I expected life to be new, modern, and rather American. I hoped for a land of short weeks with long week-ends where the fit-test of all children lived.

I knew New Zealand had seen no war on her own soil but I foresaw war conditions, food shortage, and a deep realisation of war even here so far away. There had been no bombing, no loss of property, so there would be homes for all.

New Zealand would have Birth Control and Psychiatric Clinics. I understood she was one of the finest governed countries in the world.

Most of all, I expected the people of this land to live open-air lives and to be happy, friendly, hospitable folk.

Realisations

I found a small rather Victorian country—though I feel it is none the worse for that. The men lead busy though easy lives and I must give them credit for their help in the home; here credit is due.

The licensing hours are such that drinking is not a leisurely, congenial pastime after a hearty meal but a mad rush between five and six p.m. standing up, on an empty stomach. If the purpose of the law is to lessen the consumption of alcoholic liquor by curtailing "open hours," I think statistics might prove the purpose to have failed!

The women of New Zealand amaze me. They work so hard all the year round with no help and are the finest housekeepers in the world. These daughters of New Zealand cook beautifully,

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sent in by listeners. Whichever joke scores the highest figure on the "laugh-meter" set up on the stage, will win a cash prize. Every "gag" used will net the sender 10/- and the winning joke each night a prize of £2. The quiz part of each programme will be recorded for broadcasting later from all ZB stations. There is to be no charge for admission, but tickets can be secured from local ZB stations.

The itinerary is as follows:

Auckland, Monday, November 12, and Tuesday, November 13, at 8 p.m. in the Town Hall Concert Chamber.

Wellington, November 15 and 16, in the Town Hall Concert Chamber.

Christchurch, November 21, 22, 23 and 24, in the Civic Theatre.

Dunedin, November 26, 27 and 28, in the Town Hall Concert Chamber.

Wellington, again, on December 4 and 6, in the Town Hall Concert Chamber.



"A mad rush between 5 and 6 p.m."



"Must herd to a shed for decency"

sew, knit, clean, wash, bring up a family, go out visiting and entertain on a large scale. They tell me the laundry wears out their sheets, so it does, though I would rather the laundry wore out my sheets than the sheets me. At first I smugly sat back and thought that at least I read the book of the month. I now find they too read the book of the month, belong to the local tennis club, sit on endless committees, and find time for Red Cross work and many other good works. Perhaps they are of a tougher stock than I. I find that New Zealand's womenfolk do not die young but do look old too soon. How I admire them for their capabilities, but how hard I am going to find their goal to achieve.

It is apparent that many people with undoubted ability do not seek political honours. They prefer other spheres of life in New Zealand, or have gone overseas to seek wider opportunities. The men and women working overseas are great ambassadors for this little country. I think that is one reason why New Zealand is so admired abroad. Another reason, of course, is the reputation gained for New Zealand by her fighting and nursing services in the last two wars.

Blinds and Bathing

The food situation and the lack of actual war in New Zealand amaze me.

One could live quite healthily here almost without rationed goods. Nobody has ever been short of food; no one has slept for months in an air raid shelter. There can be no realisation of war. The acute housing problem remains a mystery to me.

Why does New Zealand "wear" blinds? I do not think I have ever seen them in a home before. Aucklanders tell me they protect us from the sun. Does this apply in Wellington? I am told it does when summer comes to Wellington. Perhaps it did not last year. It occurs to me that it might be a custom brought by the pioneers and has remained. England, too, had blinds in 1840.

Where is my free open-air life on the beach? I am not allowed to undress on the beach. I must herd to a shed for decency. I think of Bournemouth and coves in Cornwall and people quietly undressing under bathing robes with their own family—and I wonder.

Good Impressions

So many good impressions of New Zealand have I had (and am having more daily) that I find it hard to enumerate them. There are just a few flashing through my mind: healthy children through the Plunket Society, dental clinics, free milk and apples for schoolchildren.

New Zealand requires no tips. It offers equal war gratuities to both sexes irrespective of rank. Its women wear real flowers, a custom we would do well to copy in England.

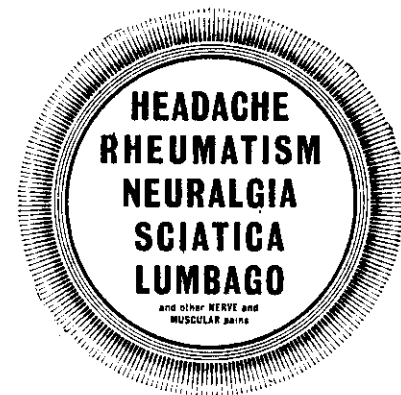
New Zealand's finest features are her geography and her climate. "Libya has no geography." I suggest New Zealand is her true opposite. I have been fortunate enough to have travelled from Ninety-Mile Beach as far south as the West Coast. The variety of the country, the grandeur, the bush, the rivers, the sea, must be unsurpassed anywhere else in the world, without all the local interests of New Zealand such as the geysers, hot springs, and indigenous bush. I have never seen the blue sky so often. Let us up with our blinds and let in the sun! The winter climate even in Wellington is very good.

Settling Down

The people of this country are even more hospitable than I could have believed. We are welcome. They are generous not only with gifts of money for all appeals and clothing for UNRRA—but will give generously too of their valuable time. They never refuse.

I feel it is not New Zealanders' duty to make us happy but that it is our duty to be determined to be happy. We should make New Zealanders want us to stay. The country has much to offer us and we will have great happiness here; but, as we say in Yorkshire, we must have the "guts" to find it.

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